READER LONDON

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

FALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

No. 922.-VOL. XXXVI.]

EL, vy, ice ud-int

ng, nd

to

r,

r,

FOR THE WEEK ENDING JANUARY 1, 1881.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.



BROTHER AND SISTER.

A SPRIG OF MISTLETOE:

A CHRISTMAS STORY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"A Pretty Angler," "A Mysterious Husband," "A Little Love Chat," " Won Without

Wooing," &c., &c.

CHAPTER VII.

HIDDEN TEARS.

Think of him

Kindly and gently, but as of one
From whom 'tis well to be fied and gone—
So let it be.

"Mother," said Vida, walking calmly into Mrs. Haverland's boudoir, "I have heard from

"I saw the envelope," replied Mrs. Haverland, with a pleased smile, "and rejoiced with you ere you knew your joy."
"My joy is this," said Vida, with calm bitterness, "a sentence of death."

She laid the withered sprig of mistletoe upon the table and stood before her mother with bowed head and clenched hands. Mrs. Haverland scarce comprehended what it meant, yet fearing the worst looked at the woe-begone

gure before her in pained wonderment.
"Vida, tell me what has happened. Is he dead ?"

"Dead to me," was the reply. "He took this

away with him only to be returned to me in case—in case—Mother, I need not tell you more."

"The false, perjured scoundrel," exclaimed Mrs. Haverland. "What foul spirits hide beneath a mask of assumed honesty. I would have trusted him with my life."

"Mother," said Vida, "I have trusted him with mine. I live no more."

A pause followed. Vida still remained erect in tearless grief, and Mrs. Haverland sought to work out in her mind what would follow. She could see nothing but grief and misery for Vida -anger and mortification for her. But she was a proud little woman with plenty of latent strength that was sufficient to carry her through

a world of tribulation.
"Vida," she said, speaking in a tone of quiet determination, with a subdued light in her eyes, "you are not the first woman who has been trifled with, and you will not be the last. Can you forget him?"

"Will you teach yourself to despise him?"

"How can I, when even now with the rent in my heart fresh and bleeding I cannot think of him otherwise than as I deemed him to be?"
"Is there no mistake?"
"Why is he silent, mother? Is not this ad-

dress his writing, with the seal of the embassy? No, it is all too true. But an enemy has changed him—poisoned his mind against me. I have nothing to do but to bear it."

Mrs. Haverland arose and, drawing Vida to her side, kissed her with a mother's tenderness. "You must live it down somehow," she said, "The world must never know that a Haverland has been slighted." "I will keep it from the world if I can," was

Vida's reply.

When the colonel heard the tidings he turned when the room with deadly white, and looked around the room with an angry glance in his eyes as if seeking some object on which to wreak his vengeance. His wife had never seen him look like that but once before, and that was when they were in India. Early one morning the colonel was aroused in his bungalow and told of the ghastly deeds of Cawnpore, and then with just such a face as he showed now he rose up and buckled on his sword.

"I am going," he said to his wife, "to avenge our sisters and their children," and it was said of him that his face never regained its colour until the mutiny was over and the evil doers righteously punished.

Mrs. Haverland was alarmed and besought him to be calm. "I am calm," he said, "but if Paul Legarde ever shows his face in England again I will horsewhip him through the streets. If I meet him abroad he or I will die. dastard hound, with his curt cruelty. He was flirting with that Lois Lawstocke before he went away.

"Or she with him," said Mrs. Haverland, unable, in spite of her anger, to quite shake off her old liking for Paul.

"No woman can flirt with a man without his aid and consent. Where is Beaumont? Is he coming to-day?"

"He promised to be here to dinner. We have a few people coming, among them Lois and her mother."

"Have you reserved a seat for Wadmore? I have invited him ?"

" By your desire I have, but I do not like the man

"He serves our turn," the colonel said. "His shrewd business sense is making me rich. In common gratitude I'm bound to give him what he signs for-a lift into society. As soon as Beaumont comes—if you should see him first—let him come to me."

Nothing more was said just then. The colonel to a board meeting of the Hassard went off Deep Rock Mining Company, in which he had lately invested and allowed himself to be put on the list of directors, and Mrs. Haverland and Vida went for a drive in the park.

They met many acquaintances and friends, ad Vida never appeared gayer. Even Lois was deceived, and in bitterness of Lawstocke heart wondered if she had not been fooled by Cater Wadmore. That gentleman appeared in the Row late accompanied by the colonel, and came to pay his respects as her carriage rested under the trees. The colonel merely bowed and passed on.

"Have you done anything yet?" she asked of er lover. "You are tardy I should think." her lover.

'It takes time to do things well," he replied. "Are you so impatient of our separation? Why not unite our hands as well as hearts, indifferent to the weal or woe of others?"

There was his customary cynicism in his words, and they brought a dark flush to her face. It galled her to think that this man, so far beneath her in a social sense, should assume that he could do as he pleased with her-at one time the lover, at others the cynical MASTERholding her in his iron grasp, assured she could nerself free.

not set nerself free.

"Assure me of your success, and then come to me," she said. "You will see how willing I am to perform our contract then. What ails the colonel? He seems to be a little ruffled."

We have had a bit of a row at the beard wanted a lot of particulars that we who pull the ropes are not disposed to give him-just yet. He will know all about it by-and-bye."

He laughed softly, and, bowing to Lois an others came up, chambled off with a quiet smile upon his face. Many turned to look at him as he walked the length of the room, and more than one soft whisper reached him. "There goes Wadmore, the millionaire," one man was saying, "he is making a thousand a day, I am told."

"How they all play into my hands," he mut-ered. "A month hence if I but crook my tered. finger they will come and pour their gold like water into my lap. All goes well. Ha! here is that young fool Beauchamp. How do you do, Haverland?"

"How d'ye do, Wadmore?" drawled the young exquisite, releasing a friend's arm to give the great speculator's hand a languid shake. "How the deuce can you afford to squander time here? Every minute must be worth pounds to you."

"I must have breathing time," said Wadmore. "There is pleasure in making money, but only joy can be found in spending it

"Egad! that's true," said Beaumont-"the only joy I know in connection with money. only joy I know in connection with money. I never made any yet, I have not a coiner's ability. Will you allow me to introduce a friend, Charles Lysaght, of the 10th? Charlie, this is our millionaire, Mr. Wadmore. You fellows will sympathise with each other. The only wonder to me is that your wealth doesn't smother you."

"Happy thought," said Charlie Lysaght, who was a glass of fashion and the mould of form. but indubitably a born fool. "When tired of life, when worn out, go to bed in bank-notes and get smothered. Better than that fellow in history or somewhere who put himself into a tub of wine.

"A deuced good idea that," said Wadmore,

when you are near. Not a woman has looked at either of us since we met.

"Don't make Lysaght more vain than he is," id Beaumont. "Leave the spoiling of him to said Beaumont. women. They are doing it fast enough."

"Deuced awkward thing to be such a favourite," replied Charlie. "Can't get a moment's peace."

"You dine with us to-night, Wadmore?"

"Yes, I shall have that pleasure."

"Lysaght is coming too. I want you fellows to know each other."

"Honoured!" "Most happy!" "Delighted I'm sure," were the felicitations exchanged, and the men parted, the young dandies to gratify the eyes of their admirers, and Cater Wadmore to his rooms, where he had some letters to answer and a few little matters to think over.

At the end of the row Beaumont came upon his father sitting in one of the chairs with his eyes fixed on space and his thoughts far away from the gay scene around him. It was something for Beaumont to see him there, and nodding a good bye to Charlie Lysaght, who gave him a languid "Ta-ta" in return, he took possession of a chair just vacated at the colonel's

"Ah, Beaumont, my dear boy, how do you do? Thank you for waking me up from a journey across the clouds. Day-dreaming is a new thing to me."

"I trust you are not unwell, sir," Beaumont said.

"No-and yes," the colonel replied. "I am well in body, irritated in mind. Two matters well in body, irritated in mind. Two matters trouble me, and to speak of the lesser first I must tell you that I don't like the look of some of those companies Wadmore has led me into."

"Indeed, sir ?"

"I do not. There is, I fancy, a lot behind the scenes, but he assures me that there is no more than the usual and very necessary reserve. It may be all right. The other affair is more serious. Paul Legarde has coolly thrown Vida

Beaumont started in his sent as if he had been stung, and a paleness curiously like that which appeared on his father's face dawned in his. All the languid puppyism which he assumed in ordinary life died out of him and he became a stern, angry man with a wrong, and a will to avenge it.

"Paul Legarde broken his word?" he exclaimed.

"I assure you it is so," replied the colonel, and told him the few circumstances of the sprig of mistletoe, its acceptance and return. In conclusion he said: "Your mother is anxious to pass the affair over, but we cannot do it. One of us must take it in hand."

"Let the task be mine," said Beaumont, huskily.

"You must get leave and go to Persia, my dear boy. Hunt him out, and if anything happens to you there will be me left."

"I cannot have leave for a month, sir," Beaumont said, "there are so many of our fellows away. But my anger will keep till

"It should keep while you live," said the colonel, proudly. "This is the first time Haverland has been so deeply insulted, and must be the last. Go to him and demand the grounds of his dastard conduct. There may be some justice in what he has done, although I can see no loophole for him."

"He shall answer for it," said Beaumont, between his set teeth. " Poor Vida! How does she bear it?"

"Bravely," replied the colonel. "She is here to-day. to-day. Your mother is of opinion that Lois Lawstocke is at the bottom of it all."

"Paul used to be spoons on her," said Beau-The idea of your being tired of life with all the eyes of the woman world on you. No chance of us plain fellows getting a glance of the must answer for it."

CHAPTER VIII.

REFUGE IN LONELINESS.

From yonder ivy mantled tower

The moping owl doth to the moon complain
Of such as wandering near her secret bower
Molest her ancient, solitary reign.

"THE Persian mail is in and I tell you the

thing is DONE."

Cater Wadmore made the announcement in the drawing-room of Colonel Haverland's house, leaning over the back of the ottoman so that his words could reach the ear of Lois Lawstocke. At the other end of the ottoman sat Mrs. Haverland. Vida was stooping over a portfolio of water-colours, half bored to death by Charlie Lysaght, and just behind stood Beaumont, twisting his moustache and thinking of somebody in Persia on whom he was thirsting to call.
"Not so loud," said Lois, behind her face.

" I do not want to be considered a conspirator.

How do you know?"

"Look at her eyes—watch the colonel—note Mrs. Haverland—Beaumont—all of them. Can't you see what is in them? Raging tempests, my dear Lois."

"I have noted nothing."

"You have poor eyes for a woman. Can you not test the truth of what I say? Tell her you think of going to Persia.'

She started and turned upon him quickly and looked steadily into his eyes for a few minutes. The action caused him no little surprise. "What is the matter with you?" he asked.

"Who told you I am going to Persia?" she re-

"Nobedy, of course," he said. "What next will you get into your head? I suggested your making the observation to see how she would take it."

"Ah, well, I suppose it was a jest of yours, but I am going to Persia."

A look of increased surprise came to his face, and it was now his time to scrutinise. Was she incit was now his time to scrutings. Was say justing? No, she spoke in earnest, and with the cool assurance that he had no real power of preventing her doing as she pleased. "What the dense put that into your mind?"

he asked, roughly.
"It has been in my head from the first," she replied, "I am obliged to you for clearing the

You forget our compact."

"I annul and destroy it. I deny that it ever

He smiled a strangely forbidding smile, but he kept cool. When he spoke again it was as if

he had been very much amused. "I always thought you were treacherous," he said. "Don't you think it rather a dangerous thing to play such a trick upon me?"

"No," she replied. "I do not fear you. If you like you may make a scene here. Speak out and tell them what is between us."

"That would not answer my purpose."

"I know that, and accept my thanks for what you have done. In a fortnight my mother and myself will start for the East under the protection of the Ambassador for Constantinople. We may not go to the land of the Shah, but on our return Paul Legarde and I will come together."

"I wish I had your audacity," he said, " then indeed I should make fortunes; as I am I only gather in beggarly sums. Would you like to gather in beggarly sums. Would you like to know how the rupture was made between this pretty pair?"

" No, it is enough for me it has been made, and, if I know the Haverlands, can never be repaired. You had better not linger longer in confidential talk with me. I have no wish to be compromised."

He gave her credit for having deceived him from the first, but in reality the idea of going to meet Paul Legarde was a sudden resolve. Lois was a woman of impulse, quick in forming plans and as quick in executing them without much thought of the issue. She knew Sir Temple Aiden, who was going to Constantinople on a mission to the Sultan, and was assured he would gladly permit her to join his party. It

andde sessio meet . But deter more, deceiv left he who w He

he had out at gaged an hor and h To the fore, f daugh "Pr strang to mai

when :

who ir

she sa little i the gla served incom fortun Perl aspira been t he sco taking his clu cently on acc The

ebligir "Do Beaun " No "and i happy eighty "Th please "Oh assum overdo more e

who w

or less "As more d It is me." Cate humou cheque

hand h

"Yn

head.

I have

morrov Over think v talking friend led on he tok mistlet "It said W

"and h Prospec Your si "Al endorse

never a her, I h Cater siasm, could a

love th

was so long to wait for Paul's return, and a sudden dislike for Cater Wadmore taking pos mestion of her she made up her mind to go and meet the man she thought she really loved.

But it was the cool way she announced her determination that completely deceived Wad-more, the man who thought he never could be deceived, and with a smile to hide his fury he left her to make himself agreeable to any woman who would encourage him.

He did not go near Vida. Such designs as he had upon her he would endeavour to work out at some more fitting season. Nobody else but Mrs. Martingale, the widow, being disen-gaged, he went to her and fed his mind for half

hour on tittle-tattle and scandal. But he watched Vida closely though covertly, and having a key to her misery could read it. To the others she was the same Vida as heretofore, full of sincerity and grace, the charming daughter of as pleasant a host and hostess as

could be found in society.
"Pride supports her," he thought. "Pride does strange things. I wonder if it will induce her to marry ME

He put aside the prospect for contemplation when alone, and devoted himself to the widow, who in the sanguine spirit of her race thought she saw light in the distance. She was very little if anything older than he was, and really the glass told her she was wonderfully well pre-What a leap it would be from a poor income, a mere pension, to the mistress of the fortune of a millionaire.

Perhaps Cater Wadmore saw through her aspiration and was amused, or he might have been too busy with other things. In either case he scon tired of his frivolous companion and taking leave of his host and hostess went off to his club—the Travellers—to which he had re-cently been elected, mainly, as some one said, on account of his having travelled very little.

There he was presently joined by Beaumont, who was in very low spirits, and Wadmore to rally him sat down with him to écarté, and most

chigingly fleeced him of twenty pounds.
"Do you want the money to-night?" asked
Beaumont. "I am awfully short."

"No, my dear fellow," was the gracious reply, "and if I can lend you a little I shall be most happy to do so. Shall I write you a cheque for

eighty and take your bill at six months ?"
"That is without interest," suggested the pleased Beaumont.

"Oh, bother interest," said the other, with an assumption of good fellowship that was a little overdone and would have been seen through by more experienced eyes than those in Beaumont's head. "I like you, and do it in love for you, as I have many hundreds lying idle and one more

or less won't matter."
"As I live," said the young man, "I am more deeply indebted to you than I can express. It is the kindest thing a fellow ever did for

Cater Wadmore nodded with a careless good humour, and passed on to a table to write the cheque. As he slipped it into Beaumont's hand he said:

d

n

n

8

n

e

n

ge.

git

"You can send the bill on to my place to-

Overwhelmed by an act he could not but think was one of rare generosity, Beaumont sat talking and smoking and drinking with his friend until a late hour. Little by little he was led on to talk of his family affairs and finally he told the story of the returned sprig of mistletoe

"It is the most pitiful story I ever heard," said Wadmore, with well-assumed indignation, "and he must be a mad fool to throw aside the prospect of such a lovely woman for a wife. Your sister has no peer."

"A brother's partiality naturally leads me to endorse your opinion," said Beaumont, "but it

never struck me that you admired her."
"I have admired her from the moment I saw her, I have indeed."

Cater Wadmore had no need to feign enthusiasm, for he meant what he said. Lois present could always inspire him with the baser sort of love that is rightly called passion, but Vida,

absent or present, had a lasting charm for

Beaumont sat studying his rapt face, while he, apparently unconscious of being observed, continued to dilate upon his admiration

"There was always something in Miss Haver-land," he said, "that lifted me above the cold earth. I have been glad to put aside baser things—the drudgery of money-making, the coarseness of everyday pursuits, the folly of what we call pleasure—to think of her. She has had, unconsciously, a great influence over my life."

By Jove !" exclaimed Beaumont, "I am inclined to think you are in love with Vida.'

"What matters whether I am or not?" said Wadmore, lowering his voice to a beautiful tone of mock sadness. "I cannot tell whether I am or not, for I dare not analyse my heart. is a bridge between us that she will not pass over. I have always told you that I am not a man of family—of no particular family—highly respectable and all that sort of thing but no more—and I know that money alone won't do for the Haverlands-What am I saying? Forgive me, old fellow, I have been led into wandering a

"You have said no more to me than any honest fellow might say," replied Beaumont, "I believe you to be a good fellow, Wadmore, and if ever Vida can be brought to think kindly of you I won't stand in your light."

Cater Wadmore seized his hand and wrung it fervently, then rose up and bade him a hurried

good night.
"You have raised a wild hope in my heart," he said, "but keep my secret, for it may never be realised."

It was on the following day that the brother and sister were alone, Vida busy with needlework and Beaumont poring idly over a novel from which he frequently raised his eyes and glanced at her over the top of the volume. Not a word had been exchanged between them for half an hour when he broke the silence

"Vida," he said, "I hope you won't grieve for that fellow Paul."

"I will endeavour not to do so," she replied, "but do not call him hard names, think of him as I do-as he was."

"Do not think of him at all, as I mean to do Why should you waste your young life in brooding over what HE was, the poor, pitiful beggar? Put him aside. There are as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it and better."

She lifted her eyes to his as if to read his

He met her look with a smile, and laying aside his book sat up, resting an arm upon the couch.

Beaumont was one of those naturally graceful fellows who are pleasing to everybody, abroad or at home. Vida thought him one of the handsomest men that ever lived, and he had a great power over her, and he was aware

"Why do you talk in that way, Beaumont?" "Because I want you to forget Paul and in time to think of another. I know one man at least who would lay himself at your feet. He

has admired you ever since you first met." "Am I to be false to my love because Paul is?" asked Vida. "I loved and bound myself by that love. I linked myself to a SPIRIT that was in us both at the time. If Paul has cast it from him is there not more reason for me to hold it fast? Shall I not for truth and hon sake cling to it? But who is he who has loved

me so long in secret?"
"Cater Wadmore."

"Beaumont!"

"You seem surprised, Vida, but I assure you it is a fact."

"I am more than surprised, I am angry with im for his audacity. How dare he love me? him for his audacity. How dare he love mand what madness led him to talk about it?"

"Why, as for that," said Beaumont, calmly, "any man may love, and every man when he loves talks of it more or less. I don't see that you have any right to be angry with him."

"Has he spoken to you of it?" asked Vida, walls to the live.

pale to the lips.

"Yes, last night. We were talking of one thing and another when I let out all about Paul" Paul.

"On, Beaumont, Beaumont, how can you be so unkind to one who loves you so? If you had a secret I would guard it as my own-as my life and now where is mine?-already half our world

"As it would be sure to do, Vida, ere a month is out."

"I cannot blame you," she said, "for I know you would not be otherwise than kind to me, but I cannot remain longer in town. I must return to Haganhaugh, if I go alone. They can talk of me when I am gone, no shaft will reach me in my loneliness.

He tried to fight her purpose down, but she was firm.

Nor was the pressure of the colonel and his wife of any avail.

"I will not remain here now that the dishonour of Paul is known," she said, "for is it not mine also? No; I will hide away at Haganhaugh until it is forgotten."

Mrs. Haverland went back with her, and the colonel and Beaumont remained in town, the former held there by his interest in the speculations on which his fortune hung, the other to run to and fro between Aldershot and London, keeping to his duty until such time came when he could obtain leave of absence.

Beaumont thought it just that he should tell Cater Wadmore of the reason of Vida's going, and that worthy affected an air of resignation over what he said he had seen would be the inevitable.

"I knew it would be so," he added, "and I have by my rashness only lost the pleasure that seeing her gives me. But I shall see her again, and I am going down to Haganhaugh with the colonel ere long. I will show her then she has no need to fear any impertinent persecution from me."

As he sauntered down Pall Mall alone his thoughts took a different turn to his words.

"A little brooding in the solitude of that con-founded old place will do her good," he muttered, "she will grow softer, more yielding, and, as I trust, giper, so that my hand may find the prize ready for the gathering."

CHAPTER IX.

A JOURNEY CHECKED.

Short was his life, his memory too Should rest alone with those who knew The brilliant start, the brief career Which, meteor-like, now leaves him here.

LADY LAWSTOCKE was very much averse to going abroad, especially to such a place as Constantinople, where men were the absolute rulers of everything.

She had an instinctive love of authority, and had ruled her husband with an unswerving iron hand down to the last moment of his life.

He had never dared to stand up against her

She had also a little coterie of friends and acquaintances with whom her word was law.

What she sanctioned met with their approval, what she objected to was forthwith tabooed. Her love for home was, therefore, no marvel.

In addition to being head of her set, she had certain pleasures and pursuits that could be indulged in with more safety in England than abroad.

She was fond of cards, and was very lucky with them, except when she was in Paris, or Naples, or Pau-the only foreign places she had ever resorted to-and there good fortune always seemed to be on the side of the foreigner.

Skill might have had something to do with it, but she called it luck, and preferring cards at home played at all times and seasons with won-derful persistence, and enjoyed life after her own

heart amazingly.

But no bliss is without alloy, no life without its troubles, and one great source of irritation to her was her proud and beautiful daughter Lois, who, in private and occasionally in public when she chose to be more than ordinarily despotic, was merciless to her.

About a week or so after Vida and her mother retired to Haganhaugh Lady Lawstocke and her daughter were at breakfast-a meal that too often began with a small dose of honey and finished with gall.

They were alone, having dispensed with the

attendance of servants.

Lois was tempted, as usual, to irritate the wretched, worldly old woman to whom she owed

Lady Lawstocke, to do her full justice, always strove to avoid scenes, and held her temper as long as she could, but once over the border she kept up a rattling fire, and occasionally did much damage to her rebellious daughter.

"A charming morning," said the old lady, glancing over the list of marriages in the Morning Post; "pour out some tea, Lois, dear. We shall have a fine afternoon for the Botani-

"WE," said Lois, "you mean you will have. I am not going.

Have you changed your mind, Lois ?"

"Yes. I see nothing to be gained by crawling through the greenhouses and walking up and down that trumpery lawn."

"You are very hard to please," sighed her mother. "I have known the time, and not so long ago, when you could not have stayed away.

Time changes us all," said Lois, shortly, "even you with all the little preserving arts you have picked up from the perfumers. Will you have picked up from the perfumers. you have any cream in your tea?"

You know I do not in the morning."

"I know you have a habit of changing your mind. But about this afternoon. There is no need for you to keep away. Go and enjoy yourself with other young people—I am getting old."

"Don't be ridiculous, Lois."

"I am serious. I am getting old. I must hasten to get a husband, and for that reason I am going to stay at home to look out things to be packed-we start in eight days for Constantinople.

A mad idea," sighed Lady Lawstocke.

"Mad! how can you make it so? I have a prospect of going on to Persia with the right sort of people. If not Paul Legarde must pass through there on his way back, and I shall catch

"If he is to be caught, Lois."

"If I were to wait for encouragement from you I should wait until the crack of doom. mothers were like you there would be no mar-

How can you be so unjust. Have I not

"Hawked me everywhere.

"Have I not spent two-thirds of my income upon you so that you might go everywhere? Have I thrown a chance away? It is all your own fault, Lois. I shall offer up thanksgiving when you get a husband.'

"It will be the first you have mumbled since you were a woman," said Lois, "a thanksgiving from you in any case would be half filled with

grumbling."
"Lois, I will not endure these insults from you," said the poor, hagard old woman, raising

"That is right," sneered Lois, "scream out for the benefit of the servants' hall. Let them know all that passes between us. I believe you chatter to your maid of our affairs as if she were your friend."

Lady Lawstocke stirred her tea with a trembling hand and drank a little. Resolved upon not extending the quarrel she took a small piece of thin dried toast and proceded to break it; but Lois would not let her rest.

What I am," she said, "you made me. Had I been born deformed you would have mocked and misled me. A mother's love could not rest in your heart. It would be frozen there."

"Great Heaven, Lois, how can you be so cruel cried the old woman, holding up her hands. "Do you forget who I am, my age, and what is due to yourself as well as to me?"

"I forget nothing, mother, not even your taunts about my not being married. But they

When Paul marries me you will soon cease. can go your way, you would be less endurable to him than you are to me."

"Don't forget there is many a slip betwixt cup and lip," said the old woman, unable to cup and lip," said the old woman, unable to control her fury. "You are too sure of your

"Ah, there spoke the mother-from your point of view.

" Lois, forgive me. I did not mean it. You taunt me into saying unkind things and then reproach me. Let us try to live in peace the little time we have left to be together. At the most you will not be troubled with me long. My

life must be drawing to its close." It was pitiful to see the pleading agony of the wretched old woman and the hardness of the daughter who listened. No man witnessing the scene would have married Lois, even to save his Better to lay it down at once than have it

turned to years of bitterness by such a woman.
"Lois," the mother went on, "what more can I do for you? Am I not pinching myself for your outfit to go abroad? Am I not about to leave all I care for to go with you? Shall I not leave my little world behind me and go into a strange land with which I have no sympathy? Be fair to me if you can—at least be just."
"Are you going to the Botanical?" coldly said

Lois, as she moved from the table.

Will you go with me ?"

" No."

"Do you wish me to go alone?"

" I do.

"Then I will go, Lois. I will reverse the laws of nature and the mother shall obey the daughter. Only let there be peace."
"When there is peace here," said Lois,

smiting her bosom with her clenched hand, "then I will help to give peace to you. But how can I, with a nature that is ever at war with itself, plant the olive branch in your breast? Do not ask for impossibilities."

She rushed coldly from the room, leaving her tother in tears. Lois had no sympathy with ears. They were things that she had not shed mother in tears. tears. They were things that she had not shed since childhood and she seldom shed them then. She had a hope her eyes would never be dimmed by tears again.

She saw no more of her mother that morning, and when they met at luncheon it was only to exchange a few cold, indifferent words. At three Lady Lawstocke started for the Botanical Gardens, and Lois, with the assistance of her maid, began the inspection of her wardrobe.

It was not a very extensive one for a lady in her position, and in it there were many dresses that had been subjected to many dressmaking artifices so as to conceal their original identity. These she regarded with angry contempt, and muttered a little about the curse of poverty that made her maid wonder if she had any idea of what poverty was.

They were in the thick of the tumbling over

and sorting out when a letter was brought in

by one of the housemaids.
"From a gentleman below, miss," she said.

"He says it is of importance. She knew the handwriting, it was that of Cater Wadmore, and she was disposed to toss it aside without reading it. But second thoughts suggested that he might have ample reason for troubling her, and adopting their dictation she

opened it. "DEAR LOIS,-Let me see you at once. I have very important news from Persia. Letters have just come in to the Admiralty.—Yours as ever,

"I like the flippant arrogance of this man. she muttered aloud. "Tell Mr. Wadmore I will be down in a minute or two."

She was bent upon letting him see she was in no hurry to hear this news and kept him waiting half an hour. Then she sauntered down and entered the drawing-room with cool indifference. He was seated by the window reading some papers, which he thrust into his pocket as she drew near.

"You had forgotten me, I feared," he said,

"and I was on the point of going."
"I am not likely to forget you," she answered,

"but I was busy packing and could not come down.

"Would not if you like. Choose the phrase that pleases you best."

" Neither pleasesme, but I don't suppose you care for that. Why are you packing

"I am getting ready to depart for Constantinople.

"And your object in going there, Lois?" "You know it very well-to meet Paul Le-

"You may spare yourself any further trouble. Pack nothing more—Paul Legarde is dead!"

(To be Continued.)

SCIENCE.

THE ELECTRIC RESISTANCE OF GLASS .- It has long been ascertained that the electric reof a piece of glass diminishes as the temperature is raised; but the recent experiments of Mr. Thomas Gray, demonstrator in physics and instructor in telegraphy in the Imperial Engineering College of Tokio, Japan, have elicited the fact that the resistance varies more slowly when the glass is cooling than when it is being heated, and that a piece of glass may have its resistance permanently increased by being slowly raised to a high temperature and slowly cooled. There seems, in Mr. Gray's opinion, to be what may be called a permanent change in the quality of the glass, which takes place coincidently with a temporary or quasielastic change in the quality. This result has a practical bearing, for it shows that a loss of insulating power on the part of glass stems, or electrometer jars, etc., may be cured by keeping the glass at a high temperature for a considerable time, a treatment which is sometimes adopted in the case of badly-insulated ebonite or hard rubber.

FIRE EXTINCTION .- An experiment, having for its object the instantaneous extinction of a fire without the aid of an engine, was recently tried on a vacant piece of land, in the presence of Captain Shaw and several other gentlemen. The results depended upon the application of a solution of silicate of sodium and other chemicals, which were dissolved in water in certain definite proportions, the solution being applied by means of buckets. To test the merits of the invention a pile of interlaced timbers 9 feet long, 3 feet wide, and 6 feet high, and having the apertures packed with straw, was built. Prior to ignition it had six gallons of paraffin and a gallon of heavy petroleum thrown over it. The fire having been lighted and the flames allowed to take good hold of the timber, about 12 or 14 gailons of the solution were thrown over the burning pile and instantly extinguished the flames. In the course of about ten minutes, however, they again broke out afresh, and were gaining upon the timber when a further application of the solution was made, which effectually quenched them, but with a total expenditure of a largely excessive quantity of the solution. There was, however, a strong wind blowing, and this told against the experiment, which was consequently inconclusive, proving nothing either for or against the invention. It is, however, to be reeated and made comparative, as suggested by peated and made comparative, as suggested of Captain Shaw, by having two similar piles fired, one being treated with water and the other with the solution, the liquids both being applied by means of small engines.

witl

coul cou

Tha

her

It w

gra her

har

idol

war

her

tun

non

law

and

set

bac

whi

nig

B

AECTIC PHOTOGRAPHY.—Through the medium of Lieutenant Chermside, R.E., Mr. Mitchell, R.N., and particularly Mr. Grant, the camera has been more instrumental in showing us the true character of the Polar regions than all the volumes that have ever been written on the subject. Instead of calling up false sentiments of romance, the photographs show us cold, inhospitable shores, black seas, and storm-swept reaches, that bring home most vividly a sense of weird desolation and of ice-bound solitude.



[THE BLOW FALLS.]

VERA'S VENTURE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

" So Fair Her Face," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXII.

" TEARS, IDLE TEARS."

Night is the time to weep—
To wet with unseen tears
Those graves of memory where sleep
The hopes of other years—
Hopes that were angels in their birth,
But perished young like things of earth.

Poor Nellie Rivers was so dazed and stunned with all that was going on around her that she could hardly realise in the first hour of her cousin's malicious triumph what it meant. That Neville, whom she had loved, was false to her was all that she seemed able to understand. It was too improbable a thing for her mind to grasp that this woman should be able to oust her from Milverstone and prove that she was not her father's child, her dear father whom she had idolized and who had loved her with all his warm heart.

Her mother too, she remembered her so well, and she was sure that she would not have lent herself to any deception for the sake of any fortune. Of course that part of the story was all nonsense, and to-morrow, when her father's lawyer came down, he would expose this fraud and set things straight. Ab, but he could not set the other straight, he could not give her back the love she had lost. Another very little while and he was to have come to arrange the preliminaries of her wedding. It was only last night she had sent him word that it must be postponed for a time in consequence of Mr. Blennerhasset's accident.

Alas, now there was no putting off, it was at

an end; and as Nellie thought the bitter thought she buried her head in her pillows and wept as if her heart would break. The tears were relieving ones, she had not been able to cry before, she had been too crushed and broken down, and they seemed to ease her burning brain.

She fell asleep afterwards, and slept in her innocent sorrow as soundly for two or three hours as did her implacable cousin from the effects of the opiate she had taken. Mrs. Carrington and her aunt both looked in at her as she lay in the early morning and let her sleep on till she waked of herself to a new sense of what was befalling her.

what was befalling her.
"Poor child," Lady Rivers said, "it is an awful blow for her."

"If you mean losing Mr. Delamere, she will get over it," Mrs. Carrington replied, "and maybe come to think it a mercy."

"I mean everything—that amongst the rest of course."

"But surely there is no truth in that other assertion—that she is not her father's heiress?" "I don't know—I can't understand," her lady-

"I don't know—I can't understand," her ladyship said, "how that girl—I can't call her my niece, I don't believe a Rivers could ever be so wicked, and she isn't my niece even if it's all true, Nellie is only a cousin—could act in such a fashion. They are not a sneaking, deceitful race. I believe she is some impostor."

"She says she can prove her identity."

"So do all wicked people till they are found out. I believe she will turn out to be some wretch off the streets who has picked up a little knowledge that she has no business with, and is trading on it. Where can the letter she talks of have been all these years, and why on earth did not Sir Darcie destroy it?"

"Then there was such a letter?"

"There was something in a letter just about the date that she named that troubled Sir Darcie Rivers very much. I know that much, but what it was I don't believe he ever told any one. Heaven grant that Mr. Venables may be in the secret whatever it is."

Mr. Venables was a fatherly, white-haired old man, who had been Sir Darcie's friend as well as his lawyer, but who had failed to bend him to his will even if he was right, as we have seen in the baronet's harsh decision to do nothing for his brother's orphan child.

He was at Milverstone as soon as ne could possibly arrive the next morning, putting off important business to see what was the matter in Nellie's household. He was intensely curious, the wording of Lady Rivers's telegram puzzled him not a little.

"A curious claim," he said to himself.
"What claim can have been put forward?
Shackleton! He's a shrewd man, and would
not lend himself to any imposture—at least, I
think not."

He armed himself with the baronet's will and whatever papers he thought might be necessary and went to Milverstone. He thought the claim must be from some relation or other who had imagined a legacy due to him or her and had been worrying Nellie, Squire Blennerhasset being incapable of helping her. Of course, she was exposed to all sorts of annoyances.

At the little station near the house he met Belton Leicester, and the two walked together to the gate of the Grange. The lawyer and the young doctor had struck up an acquaintance on one of the former's visits to his client, and they liked each other, as sensible men are apt to do.

"Do you know anything about this business, Mr. Leicester?" Mr. Venables asked. "I am sent for in hot haste, and I heard a word at the station just now that must be the wildest romance. A man said to one of the porters that Miss Rivers's maid had set up a claim to the Grange."

"Something like it, sir."

"Then I was not dreaming. I began to ask myself if I was getting into my dotage or going

"You were neither, Mr. Venables. I believe the woman asserted her absurd claim in the servants' hall, and turned upon that poor girl like the she devil she is

You know the lady then ?"

"I have come across her once or twice. Whether she is Miss Rivers, as she asserts—" Vera Rivers?"

"Miss Rivers? "The same."

"I understood she was dead."

"So did everybody else, but she is alive and

prepared to prove her identity I hear."

"I have never bad the pleasure of meeting that young person," Mr. Venables said, with a that young person, ar. venables said, with a vivid recollection of the letter she had torn in two and returned to him. "But if she is the instigator of any plot I should say ware hawk; I fancy she is capable of doing anything under the sun to serve her own ends. But where is Mr. Delamere? Why did he not come to meet me, I wonder?"

"Because he was ashamed to show his face, I should think," Mr. Leicester replied. "Neville Delamere is the greatest scoundred unbung,

Venables."

"Hey day! What has he been doing? You don't seem very friendly to Miss Rivers's future

husband. Bad policy, believe me."
"He will never be her husband; he has left her, turned from her to this woman-this cousin, if indeed she be her cousin. He was courting her before he turned his eyes to Nellie's money, the villain ?"

Mr. Venables marked the use of Nellie's Christian name and the indignation at her wrongs

and smiled to himself.

"So that's how the land lies, is it?" he said to himself. "He is smitten too, is he? He'd have made her a far better hesband than that ne'er-do-well she chose. There's no accounting for taste in these things, and what pretty Nellie Rivers could ever see in Neville Delamers I can't make out."

" I am afraid Mr. Delamere is not a favourite, he said, as they shook hands at the gate of the Grange. "I must confess if this business, whatever it is, do nothing worse than put an end to that match I shall be very well pleased."

Mr. Venables found Mr. Deacon there to meet him and Sir Wilfred Rivers was said to be on the road also. It was time for Nellie's friends to gather round her when such a matter was in hand. But there was the most important of all wanting, the one most likely to have been in the baronet's confidence. Poor Mr. Blennerhasset was still lying unconscious and knowing nothing of what was going on.

Mr. Venables gathered all he could before

the arrival of his adversary, and found the case more formidable than he had imagined. He sent for the girl who called herself Vera Rivers and found her perfectly self-possessed and ready to answer any questions he might put to her. As to her identity as Vera Rivers there was no need to discuss that point at all she declared. Her own legal adviser, Mr. Shackleton, knew her very well, and she could call dozens of people if necessary, Mr. Delamere amongst the number

Mr. Venables was more astonished than he

could tell at the way in which she spoke. She told everything connected with the finding of the letters as coolly as if she were boasting of some meritorious deed, and never flinched when the lawyer told her exactly what he thought of her for looking into the desk at all. "It was a dishonourable thing to do," he

"That is beside the question," Vera replied, calmly. "It is done, and the result has been to bring to light a great fraud. It has shown me that I am the legitimate owner of the property which is now held by the person calling herself

"Not so fast, young lady, if you please," Mr. Venables said, sharply; "we will hold that she is Miss Rivers till you prove her to be some one

"I am not interested in proving who she is. I can prove from the handwriting of the late Lady Rivers that she is not the child of Sir Darcie. My solicitor has the documents in his possession. He is here now."

shown into the room where the others most interested were assembled.

Nellie, poor child, had not put in an appear ance, she preferred remaining in her own room. She knew nothing, and she felt as if she could not bear the scornful eyes of the girl who had made such a wreck of her happiness to rest upon

her again.

Mr. Shackleton produced his papers, which were clear and decisive-genuine yond a doubt, and all bearing on the autijest in hand. The one from Lady Rivers to her husband set forth in unmistalcable terms that she had committed a fraud on him, and that she knew herself to be dying and could not take her guilty secret into the grave with her. It was dated from London, whither she had gone to consult a physician of eminence, and was evidently the outpouring of a heart overweighted with its load of consoi ness. A memorandum was attached to it saying where the child had been obtained from, there was a letter from the baronet himself to his wife commenting on the transaction, and one or two other documents which related to

Mr. Venables examined them all attentively but declined to make any remark upon them be should have settled some other points in his own mind. In his heart he felt very grave about the alliar altogether, for he believed the assertion to be true. A thousand little things came to his memory in connection with Sir Darcie that pointed to the truth of this terrible soundal. He remembered the time perfectly, and how, as Lady Rivers had said, the baronet emed sadly troubled in his mind about some-

thing.

He had refused point blank to confide in his legal advisor, and had hinted at duplicity in someone he had an affection for, just as Lady Rivers recollected his doing to her husband. Mr. Dencon could apear to that much also, but what the trouble had been that had suddenly across more Six Darris none of them could tell.

come upon Sir Darcie none of them could tell.

Mr. Shackleton was a man in good practice if not of the very highest repute, and he testi-fied to his knowledge of Miss Vera Rivers during her professional career. This young lady was undoubtedly Sir Darcie's niece, his heiress if the letters were of any value, and he contended they were.

"If you pronounce them forgeries we must fight the matter, of course," he said, when all had been said that there was to say on the sub-ject. "My client is prepared to assert her claim in any court you please."

"Your client is a woman or I might say what I think of her," Mr. Venables said, irascibly. He was something too fiery for a good-headed lawyer and he was very fond of Nellie. "If you imagine we are going to give up Milverstone

Imagine we are going to give up aniversione Grange to the first stranger who comes to ask for it you are very much mistaken."

Talking would not alter the fact of the existence of the letters, and Mr. Venables went upstairs to have an interview with Nellie, feeling more perplexed than he had ever done in his life. He found she knew nothing of them, had never heard of their existence; but he found also that she was possessed with the notion that they were true, and ready to give up Milverstone

and all in it to this stranger cousin who had so suddenly come to upset all her happiness.

"Nonsense, my dear," he said, trying to rouse her, "we must fight it to the very last. It is a vile plot and we must get to the bottom of it.

He spoke cheerfully, but in his heart he did not think it a plot but a discovery.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CLOSING IN.

A little fire is quickly trodden out, Which being suffered rivers cannot quench

A DISCOVERY! Yes, that was the word for it. The more Mr. Venables thought about it the Mr. Snackleton had just arrived and was more convinced he was that the fatal papers in

the possession of Mr. Shackleton were genuine, and that Vera Rivers was in reality the heiress of Milverstone Grange.

A thousand uncomfortable recollections of a mystery which his client would not allow him to came before him as he sat closeted with Sir Wilfred Rivers and Mr. Deacon, trying to find some ray of light to guide them in their search for the right.

"It poor Blennerhasset were only to the fore," the baronet unid, "he would tall us something maybe. Poor Sir Daraie would always be amenable to him when no one else could do any-thing with him, he may have some knowledge of

"Mrs. Blennerhasset says nothing more than we know already; she too can totilly to the time when this trouble seemed to some upon Sir Dardie and Lady Rivers, and she dates the failure of his health and uprits from that

"I'm afraid it's true," Sir Wilfred anti, stretching his legu and thrusting his hands into his trousers pookets, "everything points to

"Hush, my dear sir," Mr. Venables mid, "it will never do to make such an admission as that. We don't believe a word of it, we look up a fraud altogether, and we mean to fight the ab-suril claim to the very last."

"Oh, very well; if you like, we don't believe it," Sir Wilfred said, with a little hugh, "only we are among ourselves here, Shackleton is closeted

with his precious client, and we may as well be plain with one another."

"I think it is best to know what we are about," Mr. Dencon said, quietly. "But if Sir Wilfred is right and this horrible thing is true." will it be right to

"To fight for it? Of course it will," Mr. Venables caid. "The other side must prove their chain, and I don't think they will succeed

"H'm, I don't know," Sir Wilfred said, "it's all very awkward. There are the letters—they

are no forgeries."

"I am bound to admit I think them genuine, Mr. Venables said, with a grave, preoccupied "And there's Nellie herself, poor child," Sir

Wilfred said, "I don't know but she will be the strongest argument the otherside can bring forward

" How P"

"Why, look at her. Is she a Rivers? Has she the slightest resemblance to the family in any way? We have often made it a subject of jest with her, poor lassie, and called her a change-ling. We little thought of this."

They heard him with something like dismay.

It was a point which they had not thought of

before he mentioned it.

Nellie's fair, round, saucy face had not the slightest resemblance to the Rivers family, as he had said.

She had been like her mother people said, but the likeness was not sufficiently strong to attract attention from strangers—she might have been anybody's child as far as her face was con-

They were sitting in the inner drawing-room of the Grange when they had their little colloquy—a pretty place much affected by Nellie when she was what she called lazy—a state of being which affected her very rarely, for she was of the active order of girls; traces of her presence were everywhere about, evidences of the refined taste and delicate fancy which seem part of the nature of a graceful, well-educated woman.

It was painful to the three men, who all loved her for her many good qualities, to look round them and think how soon she might be driven out of it all, and by one who, whatever her rights might be—if, indeed, she had any rights vas not half as worthy as the sunny-hearted

girl she was deposing.

"Poor Nellie, poor child," again said Sir Wilfred, who seemed to be painfully impressed with the probability of discomfiture. "It will be hard lines for her."

"My dear sir, pray do not talk in that way,"

said M case in gation must b Only that di from almost a rust And Sir lay Ne about, 46 T said. 2

J

Her tirely romet excite would house He what Sh dread and l Sin

> quiet airai

seem Si

hear

of rig

Deaco The

despa

It thre and sake H to h to ca char jest S

hom four ove gon was nea

nes Lac nad qui the to-Ri Ve

bu Lui

sh

tis di

said Mr. Venables, irascibly, "you will do our case incalculable harm if it should come to litigation if you assume defeat beforehand. I really What's that ?" must beg-

Only a noise outside the heavy velvet curtains that divided the room in which they were sittingfrom the large drawing-room-a faint sigh, almost a moan in its intensity of pain, and then a rustle and a fall.

There's someone there," Mr. Deacon ex-

h

nd h

g

n

And they started to their feet.

Sir Wilfred pulled aside the curtain and there lay Nellie insensible on the carpet.

She has heard what we have been talking about," he said. " How did she come here? She was with my wife upstairs."

"I am sorry she has heard," Mr. Venables said, as they chafed her hands. "I know what almost fantastic notions she has on the subject of right and honour. Ring the bell, please Mr. Deacon, you are the nearest to it."

The basty peal brought a servant, who was despatched for Wilson, and she and Lady Rivers conveyed Nellie back to her own room.

Her presence in the drawing-room was en-tirely accidental, she had gone down to fetch comething she particularly valued, for in her excited state of mind it seemed to her that Vera would make her case good and turn her out of house and home without delay or scruple.

Her brain was in a whirl and she hardly knew

what she was doing.

She had no idea that there was anyone there or she would have kept to her own room, she creaded meeting anyone, even her own lawyer and her uncle, and she was startled by hearing their voices on the other side of the curtains.

She would have slipped out of the room quietly but that she caught the words "I am airaid it is true," from her uncle's lips, and they seemed to make her heart stand still.

She must hear more, and she stood almost

afraid to breathe and heard all there was to

It was true then, and they knew it-these three who were going to fight in her interests and dispute a claim that was lawful for her

She was not a Rivers!

How many times had such a thing been said to her in jest. Even her father had been used to call her his fairy bairn and declare she was a changeling, and he had not spoken in so much jest as it appeared.

She was a changeling with no right to claim the name she believed hers—no place in the home that had been hers from her babyhood.

She hardly knew that she had fainted till she found them all round her, and her aunt bending over her with an alarmed look on her face

"You were so long coming round, child," she said, gently, "you frightened us."
"Did I? I am very sorry. I shouldn't have gone roaming about the house like that—I was not feeling very well."

She did not betray by a word that she had heard anything, but apologised for her foolishness, as she called it, poor child, and not even Lady Rivers could get her to talk about what had happened.

"I will go to bed, please, aunt," she said, quietly, "perhaps I shall see things clearer in the morning-it is all so new and strange to me

to-night.

"Don't you worry yourself, my dear," Lady Rivers said. "It will be all right now Mr. Venables has come, and that nasty creature with her airs and impudence will soon be turned out of the place.'

Neilie made no direct answer to this speech, but she clung to the caressing hand that was ministering to her with a helpless manner very

foreign to her general behaviour.

"How good you are to me, aunt," she said, "I used to think sometimes——"

What, child?" for Nellie had stopped as if she did not like to go on with her speech.
"That you did not like me very much, you

used to seem cross and harsh when I fancied I

"You weren't in trouble then, child," Lady

Rivers said, shortly, "and I was a bit jealous of you perhaps in more ways than one. I grudged you Milverstone, my dear, and Millie grudged

"I think I understand what Millie envied me, Aunt Sarah," Nellie replied, with a smile that was all sadness. "She envied me my husband that was to be."

"She did, dear."

"She has had a lucky escape."

"And so have you, Nellie. He is the

" Leave him alone, aunt. There is no punishment that we can wish him that would be so great as the fulfilment of his own wishes in this miserable business. Kiss me, Aunt Sarah, and say good bye to me."

Good bye, child ?"

"I mean good night, and shut me up and let me alone. I shall have fought out the fight with myself by the morning; I feel nothing but weariness now.

"And no wonder I am sure," Lady Rivers said, as she helped Nellie to disrobe and saw her comfortably settled in bed before she left her. "You'll be all clear headed and bright in the morning and able to say what you think about all this.

"Yes, Mr. Venables and all of them will know what I think in the morning," Nellie said, with a strange calmness, born of intense excite-ment; and her aunt left her, hoping that sleep would come to her and bring her quietness at

least if not peace.

Nellie lay perfectly still till she was sure Lady Rivers had gone downstairs and that there was no one else about. Her bedrooms were at the end of a long corridor, rather a lonely place to sleep her friends thought, but her father and mother had liked those rooms, and when she became mistress of the Grange she had taken to them. They been the rooms occupied by the head of the household, and it came natural to her to take to them. There were plenty of her to take to them. There were plenty of people within call, a bell rang from her room to Wilson's, and Mrs. Carrington's room joined hers on one side, but there was no one in it to-night. Mrs. Carrington was keeping Lady Rivers's company in the morning-room, believing that her young charge was lying quietly in bed.

To be let alone seemed all that Nellie cared

for and they judged it best not to worry her. If she could forget her sorrows for awhile in sleep so much the better. They little thought, good so much the better. They have thought, good ladies, that she was up and doing while they were discussing her new trial, and that she was moving softly about her darkened room with a set purpose in her mind. No one could see her, the windows were covered with heavy curtains that effectually shut in any ray of light and she covered the keyhole so that none might escape

into the passage outside.

She had risen and dressed herself as soon as Lady Rivers's footsteps had died away and set herself to select a few things from the many that belonged to her and pack them into her truvelling bag. That at least was her own, given her by Mr. Blennerhasset. So was some of her jewellery and a few other trifles that she might surely have. She was going, poor, foolish child, unless something happened to prevent her from fulfilling her purpose, going out into the cold, dark world to do she did not know what, but something. She would be lost, and no one should ever hear of her again that had seen her in the days when she was usurping the inheritance of another.

She almost broke down when she thought who that other was and what she had robbed her of besides her inheritance, and she had to throw herself on the bed and stifle as best she might a fit of bitter weeping before she could go on with her preparations. It was so hard! Life was such a mistake that it seemed as if to go out of the word altogether and seek refuge from its ills in the nearest river would be the safest and

surest plan of ending her misery.

But hard though life may be it is strong in the young, and hope will not be crushed even in the darkest and blackest depths of wretchedness, and Nellie turned with a shiver from the contemplation of suicide.

She put the things together that she wanted, poor little bagful, and then dressed herself in the darkest and simplest clothes she possessed. They were simplicity itself, for she had always been a plain dresser—a shabby dresser Lady Rivers used to declare when she could see no good in anything Nellie did, because she was mistress of Milverstone, but, plain though the things were, they bore the unmistakable stamp of a refined taste. Every article spoke the lady, and Nellie wanted to pass for one of the common herd till she was far from Milverstone.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A GHOST.

Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves

BELTON LEICESTER was a humane man. All doctors who love their noble profession are so whether they have the power of making it ap-parent or not. He would spend as much time over the poorest parish patient if his aid was needed as if he were to receive a princely re-muneration. Mrs. Deacon declared he spoiled the poor people and made them fanciful and always wanting the doctor. He ordered far more wine and nourishing things for them than was at all compatible with true parchial economy, and he wasted his time, she protested on idle, worthless women and miserable children, who, if they ever grew up at all, would only be a burden and a trouble to the authorities for the rest of their lives.

He laughed and told her she did not mean half she said, but even Mr. Deacon, good, warm-hearted gentleman that he was, remonstrated sometimes-not on the same score, but on account of the health and strength of the young doctor himself.

"You will wear yourself out," he said to him one day, after he had sat up all night with a poor old man who wanted constant attention and who would certainly die whether he was attended to or not. " You are burning the candle at both ends, and that does not pay.

"When I find it too expensive I will draw in," Mr. Leicester replied, laughing good humouredly. "I don't think I am hurting myself by watch-

ing an interesting case once in a way."
"Not if it was only once in a way," the rector Not if it was only once in a way,' grumbled, "but you'd do the very same thing again to-night and the next night and the next if any of the women came grumbling to you.

"Oh, no, I shouldn't; all the village might come after me to-night and I shouldn't stir. I'll take care of myself, never fear, Mr. Dea-

The taking care was not much. Mr. Leicester was always at his post, and on the night when the grand explosion had taken place at Milverstone Grange and the three gentlemen had held their interrupted colloquy in the drawing-room he was out again on what was purely an errand of mercy.

A miserable woman, living a good mile away from the village, but still in the parish, had a yet more miserable daughter, a sinful, creature who had come to her wretched home to

die as it seemed. Springfield was dreadfully There was a baby there, a puny, miserable thing for whom the girl had no father, and Mrs. Dea-"set down her foot"-she was always setting down her foot, good lady—that no help should go to Betty Bird and her daughter till they were brought to a knowledge of their wickedness and chose to conduct themselves towards her with proper respect.

This Betty Bird positively refused to do. She would jeer at Mrs. Deacon whenever she met her, which she often did; for the "parsoness," as the young men of the place had nicknamed her, was indefatigable in her visits and inquiries about the private business of every one in the

parish. "Her victuals would choke me," Betty de-clared. "The grudge they was given with would stick in my throat, and I never could abear sauce, especially sermon sauce."

come:

proud

we've

it's T

you'l

wiser

sadly

light

you a

be th

me a

TH

gerii

belie

spiri

anyt

have

reas

time

have

will

mot

call

Iw

kno

I, C

"Y

not

said

bro

cal

did

TOT

day

ch

tir

ne ne wa

hi to

be pe

of

m

t]

ativa

Which speech being repeated to Mrs. Deacon made her hold up her hands in horror and solemnly excommunicate Betty Bird as far as any of her many charities were concerned.

Betty still had her parish allowance, even the rector's wife could not deprive her of that, but even that munificent bounty was not sufficient to keep her and her wretched daughter, and she was very often starving.

She was starving now, and her daughter was dying—at least, that was the statement she made to Mr. Leicester when she managed to waylay him as he was going home after his day's rounds. From what she told him, even allowing for her exaggeration, and from what he knew himself of the girl's state, he came to the conclusion that Betty was speaking the truth for once, and promised to go and see her when he had had a cup of tea.

He went, but it was only to return and fetch various things that were absolutely necessary for the sick woman, who appeared to be dying, and whose case would want watching it might be for many hours.

His landlady expostulated. "He was going to kill himself," she declared, but he was glad of whatever would take him out of himself just now and away from his own thoughts. His heart was very sore for Nellie in her trouble. He would have given the world if it had been his to have been able to comfort and protect her. But he was powerless. He could not even see her; all he could do was to call at the Grange and leave his card and ask after Miss Rivers.

Mrs. Deacon, who happened to be there, came down to him and told him Nellie was very quiet and calm, but that the case was more serious than was at first anticipated. It was not such an entirely trumped-up affair as was supposed, and difficulties would arise that might not be

smoothed over easily.
"And he has turned away from her, the scoundrel," burst from Belton Leicester's lips as he listened, and Mrs. Deacon looked at him with surprised pity.

"Yes, he has left her," she said, sadly, "and you are right, Mr. Leicester—he is a scoundrel, but that may be for the best after all. She is well rid of him, but she cannot see it yet, poor child.

The two men met when Belton Leicester was about half-way to Betty Bird's house, and Neville Delamere, craven that he was, would have passed by if he could without pretending to see who was meeting him, but the lane was too narrow, and Neville Delamere stood aside perforce to let the other go by him. He could not let him pass without trying to curry favour, like all false-hearted, mean people.

"Look here, Leicester," he said, "don't think too hardly of me for all you hear. Take a grain of salt with it, old fellow. It isn't ALL

"I couldn't swallow ALL I hear of you if I took all the salt in Christendom," was the cold reply, "and it is utterly impossible for me to think too hardly of you. Let me pass, if you please." "But look here, Leicester. You don't know

everything." No, and I don't want to. There is one thing I do know, and that is that you are the greatest scoundrel on the face of the earth. Oh, you need not begin to bluster. I am not ashamed to proclaim my sentiments, which are shared. I hope, by every one that knows you. One thing will say to you-take care what you are about.

"What do you mean?"

"Simply this—that if you are lending your-self to any fraud, and I believe from my soul you are, I will never rest till I have unmasked it. know a little more of the woman who is claiming Milverstone than perhaps she has any idea of, and she shall not hold it in peace if she is to get it by fraud."

He almost pushed Neville out of his way and strode on. Betty Bird's dying daughter was of far more importance than Nellie Rivers's faithless lover.

He found enough to do in that wretched cottage. The girl was in mortal peril from some neglected internal injury, and

with death for her miserable life.

He learned several things that astonished him in that weary time. He discovered that Betty Bird, under her cloak of misery and desperate poverty, neither of which was assumed, was a woman of a very different class from what they had been accustomed to think her, and that she was by no means so ungrateful and hard as peoagined.

"I don't wear my heart upon my sleeve for daws to peck at," she said to him anent some remark she made to him, and then when she saw him stare at her in amazement, sheadded, hastily: Oh, I've read Shakespeare in my time, Mr. Leicester, and acted him too. I'm not quite so

ignorant as people say I am."

Degraded and wretched she certainly was and had most likely brought all her troubles on herself, but he was astonished at the extent and variety of her information as they talked together that night. Some three hours had passed away and the danger was over for the present, the girl had fallen into a dose, relieved from acute pain for the present, and Betty had made Mr. Leicester a cup of tea out of some he had brought her. It was served in a cracked jam jar, but it was clean, and he was glad of it, and while it was being drunk Betty asked him a question.

Maybe I've no call to ask about my betters," she said, "but I heard a queer thing down the village to-day.

What was it?"

"Why, that Miss Rivers was to be turned out of house and home to make room for her waiting maid, and that not only her home but her lover was taken away from her. Is it true,

"In part, Betty, but not all. I hope there will be no question of any such catastrophe happening as Miss Rivers being turned from Milverstone."

"I hope not, I am sure, sir. Miss Rivers is one of the very few ladies who can give a poor body a civil word, but is it true that the claim has been made?

"And by her servant?"

"Hardly. The person who put it forward is her cousin, another Miss Rivers."

"Another Miss Rivers? What may her name

" Vera, Miss Vera Rivers. She is the daughter of Sir Darcie's brother."

"I know. Gentleman Rivers they used to call him in the profession. He was on the stage you know."

"I don't know. I have a faint idea I have heard something of the sort. You knew him then?

"Well, yes, I did. It was not much honour. And HIS daughter has claimed to be the heiress of Milverstone Grange?"

Betty looked puzzled. More than that Mr. Leicester thought, she looked frightened. The news seemed to have startled her out of all

"I like Miss Nellie Rivers very much," she said. "She has been always very good to me, and she don't season her gifts with preaching. But if the other one comes to the Grange as its mistress it will be a good day for me. She won't

let me starve.' Her manner was queer, but Belton Leicester would not ask her any questions, her affairs were no business of his, and he wanted to get away home now that his work was over. The girl would do very well if Betty attended to his directions, and she seemed sensible and clever enough. He wondered a little at her knowledge of Vera Rivers, but he had heard that the baronet's dead brother had consorted with all sorts of queer people in his career, and he was not surprised to find Betty Bird among the

It was a longish walk to his lodgings, and he found when he got out that the night was so dark that he could not see a yard before him. It did not matter to him. He knew every step of the way, and went on as easily as if the black | ments: I said, and I say, that you are the hand-

for hours Belton Leicester fought hand to hand | night had been the brightest moonlight. In the lane where he had met Neville Delamere he dropped his glove. He was carrying it in his hand according to a somewhat careless practice of his, and swinging it lightly it fell from his grasp. The road was quite dry, and he struck a wax vests to aid him in looking for it.

It was just here," he said to himself as the little match flared up and gave him the light of a candle for a brief moment. "Just here."

He dropped the light with a cry of surprise and horror, for there right in the air as it seemed before him was the face of Nellie Rivers! White and wan and despairing it looked, but it was Nellie herself with her eyes fixed on his and a beseeching look about her mouth as if she would have spoken.

"Miss Rivers! Nellie!" he said, " where are

There was no answer, and he lit another match, only to see that he was alone in the black darkness. There was no trace of anyone near him, no sound to tell of anyone hiding behind the hedge.

Light after light he held up till his box was exhausted, calling on Nellie by every endearing term he could think of to reveal herself if indeed she were anywhere near. What could bring her out at that time of the night, or rather morning, for it was somewhere about three o'clock he thought? Surely the wicked woman who had caused all the mischief at the Grange had not proceeded to any violence. But was it really Nellie? It was her face, and her face in sore distress and trouble. Was there

anything wrong and had she shown herself to him to tell him of it and ask him to come to her aid? Bah! He would not think anything so foolish! There were no such things as ghosts. He must have been thinking of her—was he not always thinking of her now? And he had conjured the image out of the darkness, that was all.

(To be Continued.)

DONALD'S GHOST.

As the moon rose one soft spring evening over the dark yews and feathery willows that bordered a quiet village graveyard, her beams fell upon the forms of two young people who leant upon the iron railing that surrounded the plot of ground on which arose a slender, white shaft, bearing upon it a woman's name and a date some five years old.

It was the name of the mother of the young man who stood beside it, and he had come to bid it farewell before his departure for America. The girlathisside was no kin to him, but she had been adopted in her infancy by his dead mother, and as children they had called each other brother and sister.

As the boy grew up, however, this mild affection ceased to satisfy him. Cicily was not his sister. She was the woman whom he loved. Of this he had often spoken. Now he approached the subject again.

"Cicily," he said, " before we part let me ask ou once more if it is not possible that you may learn to love me?"

"Donald, I have always been very fond of you. I have told you that twenty times. I regard you as a dear brother," replied the girl. "That is all folly, Cicily," said the young man. "We are not akin to each other. A sister's love does not content me. What I ask of

you is to be my wife."
Cicily only shook her head.

"You do not dislike me, Cicily?" said the youth. "You are pleased with my society. You are even kind enough to tell me that my manners and personal appearance are not disagreeable to you, and that you would not be ashamed of me. It is a matter of life and death for me to marry the only woman I can ever love. Think again, Cicily.

"Oh! Donald," pleaded Cicily, "I wish you would be more sensible. I'll repeat my compliIn

his

ice

ka

he

ise

ed

8 !

it

he

re

er

nd

ld

or

ed

id

00

er

ot

somest man that I ever knew, and that I am as proud of you as a girl could be of a brother; but we've known each other always, and I'm sure it's not love that we feel for each other, and you'll get over this folly and thank me for being wiser than you."

"Good bye, then, Cicily," said the young man, sadly. "I have been a fool, I see; but it is no light matter, as you seem to think. I shall love you all my life, and when I die your name shall be the last upon my lips. The sea is often treacherous; I may never return. You will give me a kiss before I go?"

"Yes, Donald; we have always kissed each other since we were little children," said Cicily. Their lips met. He held her hand still, lin-

geringly, tenderly.
"Cicily," he said, after a pause, "do you believe that the dead ever return to earth? that

spirits are ever seen by mortal eyes?"
"I do not know. No one can really believe anything about it," answered Cicily. "We have the word of many that it is so; and yet reason seems against it. I hope they do some--that is all."

"Listen, then, darling," said Donald. "I have a presentiment that I shall not live to re-If I do not, when you know of my death, will you promise me to come here-here to my mother's grave after the moon has risen—and call for me by name? Then, if it is permitted, I will come to you, Cicily, and tell you all I know of that Heaven we all hope to win; or, if I have not seen it, you will know at least that one who has lost it loves you still. While I am

I, Cicily, I never can forget you."
"Do not talk so wildly, Donald," said Cicily.

"You have crossed the ocean before. You are not a coward. You—"
"No, I have never been a coward, I think," said the young man; "but, Cicily, my heart is broken, and—and—there—good-bye."

He left her then with one more hurried kiss, and strode away across the graveyard. She called his name after him, but so faintly that he did not hear it. Then sadly and slowly she

also went her way.

The Dolphin sailed before noon on the morrow. She should not meet Donald for many days—for his journey was a long one—and though she loved him "only as a brother," her cheeks were wet with tears.

Alone, with Donald far away, the girl had time to think, time to read her own heart.

In the silence of her life, from which he seemed to have passed like a dream, she came to hear strange whispers : hints at feelings she had never recognised in the disguise they had always worn.

She pined for Donald's voice, for the light of his dark eyes. She grieved that he never wrote

She would have written herself had she not been ashamed to do so, but all the while she repeated to herself:

"So do sisters love their brothers. The love of lovers cannot be like this. Donald will see that some day I have saved us both from misery.

But there was no face like Donald's for all that; no voice like his; none who seemed as

admirable as he to her.

A year passed by; the time for his return approached. As the girl awaited it she bethought her how she would meet him; how she would win him back to his old brotherly liking. She could not lose her dear friend, she who had no kin on earth. He would listen to reason and forgive her.

She contrived a thousand little surprises for him; made twenty little womanly gifts; thought of nothing but his coming, and watched the papers daily for news of the ship. At last it came, but in a terrible form.

At first a doubt of her safety. Then a certainty of her loss, with all on board. Only a little while ago it seemed that in a letter to his father Donald had written:

"I HAVE taken passage on the Dolphin—the vessel in which I made my voyage out. I shall be with you very scon."

And since then there had been not one word; and now there never would be, never could be, for doubtless he had perished with those other passengers of whom the only record that remained was "all lost!"

One moonlight evening, as she stood with her face pressed against the window pane, looking out into the transfigured garden, Donald's name arose to her lips-Donald's face before her memory-and with them the knowledge of her own heart.

"Donald, Donald, " she cried, "I loved you-I loved you! Oh, Donald, I know now that I loved you."

She only whispered these words, but it seemed to her that she had shrieked them aloud. The air of the house seemed to stifle her. She pushed open the long window and slipped out upon the

Far away in the valley below she saw the form of the dark yew trees that shaded the graveyard where she had parted with Donald, and his last words came back to her, and it seemed to her that it might be possible that Donald's spirit should return to her.

The thought gave her no terror, rather she felt a great longing to seek the spot where he had promised to come to her. A light shawl lay upon a chair which stood upon the porch. Catching it up, she tossed it over her head, and wrapping her arms in it sped down the road toward the graveyard.

She met no one on her way. All was silent and lonely. As she opened the gate and saw the smooth, moonlight-flooded paths, the gleaming white tombstones and the deep, black shadows which lay behind them, she seemed to look upon

a world that she had never seen before.

"He will come to me," she said to herself, and hastened forward, and flung herself upon her knees beside his mother's grave-hiding her

face upon it.

The hand of superstition was upon her. thrill ran through her frame. She believed that she should see Donald, and as he had commanded her she lifted up her voice and called upon his name.

"Donald!" she cried. "Donald, oh! Donald, come to me !"

And then she lifted her face and looked across the grave and saw behind the white shaft on which his mother's name was engraven, a dark solemn figure slowly rise-a figure that bore the semblance of her lover.

"Who called me? Surely someone called my name," said a voice-still his.

And Cicily, trembling as aspen never trembled

yet, replied:
"It was I who called you—I, Cicily. Oh!
Donald, tell me you forgive me, for the curse
has fallen upon me, and I, who thought I could not love you, now that I have lost you shall love you for ever. Oh! Donald, take me to Heaven with you if you may, for I cannot live without you.

"Then Heaven be praised," answered the wraith, and Cicily saw that it advanced toward

Nature could bear no more and she fell senseless to the ground. Nay, not to the ground, for strong arms caught her, fond lips were pressed to hers, a warm, living heart beat against her own, and when she recovered she knew that it was no spectre that embraced her.

By one of those fortunate accidents that often occur to blind mortals Donald had missed the Dolphin on the day of her departure. His passage was paid, his luggage was on board, but he arrived only in time to see her clear the only heard of his escape on his arrival in England.

Loving his mother as he had, it was but natural that, as he passed the graveyard on his way from the station, he should linger a moment beside her tomb, and thus it came to pass that he had heard poor Cicily's confession of her love.

And so this ghost story ends with the ringing of wedding-bells, and we can declare, as the writers of fairy tales always do, that everybody lived happily ever afterward.

ZILLAH THE GIPSY.

CHAPTER XXIX.

WHEN IT DID NOT PAY.

That, sir, which serves and seeks for gain, And follows but for form, Will pack when it begins to rain And lead thee in the storm.

LIGHTS were flashing from the windows of Rosendale Hall, the sounds of violin and piano floated through its corridors, and were caught up by the night wind that rustled amid the tall trees of the avenue. It was Christmas Eve, and the invited guests appeared in the height of

enjoyment.

Michael was the host, and was evidently doing things in style. The visitors, to be sure, might be considered rather the "fag end" of the aristocracy, the very dregs of the genteel people who kindly dispensed with unnecessary ceremony, and were kissed under the mistletoe boughs without much blushing but a good deal of merriment. Servants were hurrying to and fro, spirits and spices, mince pies and hot elder wine, were being served. The gentlemen smoked in the presence of the ladies, who did not appear to mind it in the least, and at the present moment were suggesting a dance

as a wind-up to the evening's festivities.

"Fill the count's glass," Michael was saying, glancing at one of his servants, "and go and fetch another batch of mince pies. I fancy we can about manage 'em after another hop."

Michael had never learnt to dance, though, to do him justice, he had been lately profiting by lessons from some celebrated sisters, teachers of the art, who had taken him in hand and had managed to make clear to his intelligence the difference in the steps between a waltz and a galop, and now he selected for his partner the charming and Honourable Maude Glasher, who had lunched with him on several occasions, and whom he intended to marry one day when the delights of a domestic career proved irresistible. Count Valdemire and other kindred spirits,

were present. A few actors and actresses gave that soupcon of dramatic daring which is pleasant and reassuring, and one old lady, a supposed widow, in a rich brocaded silk, played propriety, and wisely closed her eyes when the spirits and mirth of the convivial party grew rather too exuberant.

"Fill your glasses, gents all," said Michael, in his new character of entertainer. "Let's be

jolly for once in our lives."

"Hurrah for our prince," cried one of the guests, a well-meaning performer on a violin, though he had been obliged to pawn his best instrument and hoped Michael would redeem it for him. "May he have long life and happiness.

"Same to you, old fellah," said Michael, tipsily. "But why don't you drink? Come, dip into that Chartereuse. It's made by some miserable monks on a mountain who never set eyes on a woman, and never speak, I believe. But they must know what's what to make such stuff as that. It oils your throat, and at the same time-Why, what the dickens are they doing now?"

A large dish of "snap-dragon" had been

introduced, and at its introduction the gas was, of course, speedily extinguished in the handsome glass chandeliers, and all the party were in darkness. It need hardly be remarked that Maude received a kiss just above the handsome diamond earring her lover had given her, and another on the lips, while her pretty dark head reposed somewhere in the region of his coat collar.

"By Jove! what a lark," cried Michael, springing to his feet, while the blazing dish formed a centre object of general attack.

"Reminds you of the nursery rhyme of 'Little Jack Horner,'" whispered the count, "'Put in his thumb and pulled out a plum,' en? Really, this is interesting. Is it an English custom? In Germany we have Christmas trees and—"" mas trees and-

T

pair

and

back

fligh

falle

ing

tere

spee

of al

Chr

inqu

Cou

pen

tem

afte

T

and

in

cha

his

lun

T

les wh

su

WC

bu

su

de

pi da m

goli

it

a

Ô

"Call in the servants and let'em see the fun suggested Michael, and in they all came, that master was the best in the world, and preferring situations where mistresses had nothing to do with the kitchen.

Michael caught one of the pretty housemaids round the waist and kissed her under cover of the darkness and general excitement beneath the mistletoe hanging from the chandelier.

"It's like his impertinence," muttered the page, who was a discreet youth and went to church, and in revenge this gentle Mercury turned on the gas, but none too soon, for the snap-dragon was gradually expiring, and nobody

sought to revive it.
While all the servants had thus left the kitchen and were engaged in the drawing-room, each carrying away a glass of hot spiced wine, a man might be seen coming quickly along the other side of the thick-set hedge that was one of the approaches to the kitchen garden of Rosendale

While the guests were making merry something was happening he knew of vital importance to Michael. Should he be in time to save him? Tinker remembered his prosperous public-house in Kent, the well-stocked orchard and pretty bowling-green, his general redemption and respectability, and he wished Michael to escape and be beyond seas ere the law had time to send her emissaries to take him prisoner. So he came quickly along, his dark frieze coat tightly buttoned round him, and a short white clay pipe in his mouth, which he found some difficulty in keeping alight, so bitter was the north-east wind.

He tapped at the kitchen door, but none answered, and the darkness of the place sur-prised him. He ran round to the lawns—the drawing-rooms were also in darkness, though he could hear the shrieks of laughter within.

"They're at it and no mistake," he thought, running up the front steps and knocking loudly at the hall door. "My! what a blow it will be for 'em.'

The arrival of a visitor at midnight was a decided surprise, although Michael's habits and ways of living were so mysterious and eccentric no one appeared particularly startled.

Who can that be ?" said Michael, who had just taken his place at the fair Maude's side as partner in a final Sir Roger de Coverley, as a break up.

"Perhaps it's my stud-groom," suggested the ount. "I've been expecting him." The page had gone to the door, had opened

it, and Michael hurriedly leaving his guests was

now in the hall. The man in the dark frieze coat advanced. Michael started back with a cry.

"Tinker, what in the name of fortune brings

you here at this time of night?" "Oh, sir, take me to a quiet room and I'll tell

you. You've been a prince indeed to me, but 'tisn't the value of the quids as—" He broke off here and changed his tone.

"In another minute or so they'll be after you, You must fly-a warrant's been granted for your apprehension, but if you could get away to Liverpool or the coast and go aboard a cargo boat you might escape the prison. It's an awful place, I can tell you, sir; I knows, 'cos I was there. It's the stone jug and stale bread, and they hits you on the 'ed with anything 'andy if you don't do the oakum-picking to their satis

Michael was deadly pale, he reeled and almost

"What SHALL I do?" he muttered, with a

sullen oath.
"Do, sir? Why, get your fastest horse and gallop from this place—anywhere is better nor 'ere. It's that cursed Red Reuben's done it. He got away ye see from them keepers and climbed a wall-he's so little and light he slips through yer fingers like an eel-and he's up and e lawyers, and he's won a free pardon and the five hundred quid reward, the under-minin' scamp, and all the rest of it, and they're after you this very minute.'

The drawing-room goor had opened and a group of heads and eager faces ungut be seen clock chimed the hour of midnight.

peering over one another's shoulders. Cook, who was just bringing in a monstrous plum cake with a wedding ring in it, which would make the unmarried ladies dream of their future husbands, dropped dish, cake and all, in horror

at Michael's appearance.

"Master's bin' and done a murder," she shricked. "You can see it in his face."

"Why, prince, what is the matter?" asked Count Valdemire, touching Michael's shoulder, while the fair Maude gave symptoms of that mental ferment which is the forerunner of hys-

Michael glanced round once with the look of

a savage animal hemmed in by pursuers.

"The matter is I'm done for," he said, his

head sinking heavily on his breast.
"Is it ruin?" asked the count, pale in his

He had sold Butterfly so well, only the cheque

had not yet been honoured.
"Ruin?" echoed Maude, and touched her diamonds.

How thankful she was the marriage ceremony had not yet taken place.

" Ruin " faltered one of the actors, with pro fessional emphasis.

"Come, sir, don't waste the precious minutes," said Tinker, drearily, then in a low voice, "Every sound makes me that nervous—I seem to see them bracelets.

The violinist remembered his beloved instrument and the horrors of thirty per cent. in the same breath.

Poor devil !" was his interjection.

The count lifted his glass and stared at Tinker.

'Is this-aw-person come to arrest you for debt?" he asked.
At this Tinker winked fiercely at Michael

with the eye he fancied they could not see, and said, in a gruff voice:

"Yes, he must come away with me at once.

I've others waiting outside."
"The deuce you have," muttered Count Valdemire, who had lively recollections but somewhat the reverse of pleasant of White Cross

He glanced at his dancing pumps and the flower in his buttonhole at the same time as he gave an introspective survey at his financial

It might be as well for him to retire also. "The fact is our good friend here has been a little too generous and outrun the constable," he explained.

Whereon the whole company gave a sort of dismal chuckle.

It dawned on their comprehensions they must on retire from the convivial delights of Rosendale to various narrow streets and back slums where "Apartments Furnished" met the gaze with the reverse of an inviting aspect.

Michael was led from the room by Tinker, who bade him hurry to the stables, and here the ex-convict appeared in his element, for he handled a formidable-looking animal that had a trick of laying back his short ears and slashing out with his hind legs with the skill and daring of a Rarey, and soon had him saddled and bridled ready for Michael to spring on.

"Better ride," he whispered, "you can get

"Better ride;" ne wnispered, "you can get neater and quicker away."

"Wait a minute," said Michael, darting back to the house; he had a leather bag locked in his safe filled with diamonds, and he carefully buckled this round his waist.

"Wear my coat," suggested Tinker, rapidly unbuttoning it "that swell affair o' yours with the furs might draw notice, and take my hat, sir, it's a capital one to slouch over your

Michael mechanically obeyed.

His one object was to gain the coast and be off on some ocean-bound steamer early the following

The wind was rising in furious gusts, and a eavy downfall of sleet did not make the situation any more agreeable, large masses of heavy clouds drifted rapidly overhead, and the village

Michael was used to roughing it; he cursed the unpropitious fates, but with his diamonds safe in his leather belt felt himself capable of controlling the shifting breeze of Fortune. "Good night," he said, shaking Tinker's

hand, "we'll give 'em a chase yet, and I may

get away in time.' "Yes, yes; but don't waste the precious minutes," muttered Tinker, shivering in the muttered Tinker, shivering in the bitter blast.

And Michael turned his horse's head in the direction of the avenue, galloping furiously on-ward, applying whip and spur when he found himself well out in the open

The rain now descended in torrents.

Tinker went back to the stable, picked up Michael's great coat and put it on, then berook himself into the kitchen and warmed his hands over the fire.

"Hallo!" cried the servants. "Why ain't you with master?"

Don't know-left him in better company. 'Ave you a drop o' drink 'andy, it's a freezin

The sudden exodus of the host had so over-powered the company that they sat stupidly staring at each other in the drawing-room, uncertain what to do or say.

What does it all mean?" they asked, at last rousing themselves to be practical.

The actors and actresses said naughty things in the hopes perhaps of reviving their drooping spirits.

The fair Maude was weeping in the count's

The widow lady who had played propriety looked about the room to see what she could take, tested the silver spoons, and finally pocketed a mince-pie in a vacant state of

" Cruel, cruel man," sobbed Maude, writhing on the carpet, forgetting millinery, pearl powder and postures at this desperate crisis.

"He's a rascal," snapped the count, his thin lips curling; "what right had he to take us in like this?

"To be turned out on the morrow," cried one of the light comedy gentlemen, who had never been so comfortable in his life—music halls and penny gaffs having been lately abandoned.

"The villain," emphatically echoed the violinist, "agreed to pay me three guineas a night, and now I may whistle for my money."

The count rose to his feet, deposited Maude on

one of the satin couches, and stamped out into Here to his horror and surprise two strong-looking men laid hold of him, arresting him in mistake for Michael.

"We arrest you in the Queen's name," they began, when Tinker, with a broad grin on his face, advanced and said, coolly :

"The wrong party, gents, that's all."

"Are you not the man calling himself Prince
Anatole?"

"That's not him, boys," another voice cried, that of a detective who knew Michael and who saw at a glance that pale Count Valdemire was utterly unlike that bold swindler. "He's gone."

Gone! They all glanced at each other, and then the count, as the spokesman of the party. naturally did his best to give his late friend and

benefactor up to justice.
"He's a rare rogue," said the detective, after listening to the count's conjectures and sug-gestions, which in his own mind he read quite opposite and for once was out of his recsoning. "You think he escaped on horseback, and he escaped on horseback, and the avenue about half an hour ago." "That means," thought the detective, "he's hanging about the premises," and away they all filed to the stables, but no sign could they find anywhere of Wichael. where of Michael.

All at once a cry of horror fell from the count's lips. He pointed to an empty stall.

"The villain," he gasped, "the rascally llain. If he hasn't taken my bay throughvillain. If he hasn't taken my bay through-bred Fire Fly, worth 500 guineas if he's worth a penny, an animal I sold yesterday to Lord Leicester, and that won the Ascot Cup a year of

97

There was so much reality in the count's despair that the detectives altered their opinion and found they must search for a man on horseback. There were all the signs of a sudden flight by the confusion in the harness room, the fallen whips and saddles and over-turned blacking bottles.

"The bird's flown I do believe," they muttered, as the count doubled himself up in speechless despair on a bundle of hav.

speechless despair on a bundle of hay.

A sleepy groom had just appeared, startled out of slumbers heavier than usual through an extra Christmas feeding, and shook his head at all inquiries.

On his oath he had heard no horse's hoofs. Could swear his master had never paid him a penny for a month, but blacked both of his eyes when he asked for his money. His master's temper was quite awful at times, so that he often thought of drowning himself in the garden well.

This was all they could elicit from the groom, and as every hour was of the utmost consequence in arresting Michael's flight they were soon clear of the premises, leaving other men in

"And this comes of taking up with adventurers," grouned the count, still moralising on his soft couch in the stable. "The end of luncheons in cafés and suppers in St. John's Wood. But I've won his money, that's some comfoct. He never could understand écarté, and Maude is richer by a few thousands."

CHAPTER XXX.

ATT MART.

But if a longing born within the soul Gives thee a far-off glimpse of unknown bliss, Then let the love speed onward to tit goal, Nor thy true rest and joy for blindness miss. If thou would'st not be free Then come to me.

It was the month of May—a radiant, peerless May, such as the poets sing of—when the white bloom in the orchards is only rivalled by the splendour of the hawthorn trees, and sweet summer is in her extreme youth, dainty, coy and wonderful, for the sun caresses but does not burn the sea-shells on the beach, and there is all the romance of anticipation, the charm of suggestion, the hope of fruition in the brilliant season of spring.

Love seems part of this magic region of beauty, its soft light mingling with the golden skies, the flower-laden plains and the rich tints of this beautiful earth of ours.

A year has passed away since Madeline's death, and in that year many changes have taken place. Zillah has been reinstated in her proper sphere, the acknowledged heiress and daughter of Prince Anatole, and at the present moment she is parting with the duke, a day before their wedding.

They are standing together at a little rustic gate leading to a fantastic cottage in Kent, a little bijou dwelling that Zillah purchased for its seclusion and beauty and where she has had ample time to enjoy the luxury of rest.

For after her life of intense excitement her health gradually broke down and grew so precarious that her friends were alarmed and feared she might not live to realise the happiness awaiting her, but now all fears were over and on the morrow a quiet wedding would take place at the village church.

The Dowager Duchess of Clydale was staying with Zillah and already loved her as a daughter. She heard a long account of her career, of that other life in Italy when the duke had first loved her and she had clung to his memory through all with simple womanly faith. It seemed in truth like a dazzling romance to the duchess, who seldom heard of the course of true love running smoothly after so many vicissitudes and dangers.

"To-morrow, darling," the duke was saying as he lingered by Zillah's side and laid a loving hand in hers, " there will be no good bye said,

in a few hours you will be mine—my wife. God bless and keep you always."

His eyes rested on hers with reverence and devotion. Perhaps the long parting had been for the best for both. It had endeared them all the more to each other, it had taught them the meaning and worth of a perfect passion.

"And it will be a quiet, simple wedding," Zillah answered, dreamily. "No pomp or display. We will exclude the hard, critical gaze of the world."

"Happy weddings are best so, it is when a sacrifice is demanded that Fashion should have it all her own way—combinations of laces, satins and silks are then of more consideration than the light in eyes that smile."

"And we are happy," ahe said, her face glorified and radiant with joy.

"Ah, my Juliet, my queen, there is no kingship, no crown in all the world equal to that which holds a reflection of love's glory. The sweet delirium is our-cone more; to-day we are together, to-morrow we shall be one."

Are there not moments when the woman who is adored feels herself a goddess through the mystic incense that floats around her soul? Absence which strengthens strong love but kills that which is weak and ignoble had increased and given theirs more intensity. His hand touched the golden glory of her dark tresses. How could he ever have let such loveliness drift from out his life?

After he had passed down the garden walk, leaving her for the last time alone, Zillah felt overwhelmed with a consciousness of the joy that had fallen upon her lot.

She had quenched her former despair in a life of passionate action; she had been sustained by ambitions full of grandeur and courage, she had won fame when a weaker soul must have sunk to the earth bruised and broken beyond re-

But, after all, it was the beauty and holiness of love that now surrounded her with its deep delight.

When she re-entered the cottage Mathias came to her and saw the dreaming happiness in her eyes, the glow of warmth, the smile upon her line.

her lips.

"We shall lose you, Zillah," he said, with a sigh and the vague heart-sickness of the old who see a cherished being depart for another sphere and leave them alone. "But he gains—your beauty and genius are his henceforth, and you are more content than when fame's lauvels convent of Song."

laurels crowned you Queen of Song."

The love which had absorbed her and given her inspiration was like a wonderful flower of infinite and varied beauties in whose deep heart were both the colours that dazzle and stimulate and those that narcotise, entrance, and soothe. The laurel wreath was cold and had a worldly significance, it would also fade and wither, and many who had worn it and been crowned in their youth had perished later on in leneliness and despair.

"You helped me bear my lot," she answered, affectionately, "but for you I must have lost heart and nope; amid all the honours and wealth and worldly splendour awaiting me there will ever be a vivid recollection of your sympathy and kindness that sustained and encouraged me when desolate and forsaken. Dear Mathias, stay with us always."

The old musician shook his head.

"I must return to my world, Zillah. I could not live long away from cities. Music is an imperious mistress, she will have no divided service. After your marriage to-morrow I shall go back to Italy."

The wedding-day dawned in cloudless splens dour, and Zillah—wearing a rich travelling dresef heliotrope silk trimmed with plush, and hat, boots, and gloves to match, together with a tiny bouquet of erange blossoms, fastened with a diamond aigrette in her breast—was driven to the village church, where a few school children and

villagers lingered to see the ceremony.

Nothing could have been quieter or simpler than the whole affair.

Mathias gave away the bride, and the Dowager Duchess of Clydale could not help contrasting her son's aspect to-day to the gloom it wore on a previous occasion, far more brilliant and dazzling as far as outward display went, when the world of fashion had been represented and a graphic account of costumes, glorified by the taste of Court miliners, had been dilated on in various journals.

The marriage service was read by the vicar, and the church had been beautifully decorated with flowers, for everyone knew the high social position held by the bride and bridegroom.

Zillah's generous gifts among the poor of the neighbourhood had made her idolised throughout the parish, and the wreaths and festons that surrounded the stone walls were made by the hands of those who loved and reverenced her.

By degrees the little church was filled, and the crowd increased outside eager to get a

glimpse of the happy pair.

No wedding march was ever played with more fervour and enthusiasm than the one now performed by the blind organist, who put his soul into the music, and drew approving nods from Mathias, who had never before believed a small harmonium capable of so much volume and power.

Zillah and her husband found the old aisle literally covered with the sweetest and fairest of spring blossoms; they walked along the flower-strewn path towards the porch to the splendid music of the Wedding March, and the rapture and peace in their hearts were all in harmony with the simplicity and beauty of the scene.

The duchess whispered to Mathias that it was quite charming, but there were tears in her eyes—the happiness of those who are dear softens the hardest, most world-worn nature.

Zillah and the duke were driven rapidly from the church back to the cottage where the wedding breakfast was prepared. They both thought of that hurried drive in the past to the hotel where the message came bidding the duke depart, and they were sundered by the fiat of Fate; but now, only endeared the more to each other by pain and absence, they are certain no earthly edict could ever divide them.

"My wife at last," he nurmured, drawing

"My wife at last," he murmured, drawing her to him with tremulous emotion. Their senses were lulled in love's perfect calm. Every breath they drew was an ecstasy, and all the silent passion and unspoken tenderness of years was poured forth in the embrace of a husband.

was poured forth in the embrace of a husband.

"At last," echoed Zillah, as her head sought his breast, its one safe resting-place, while she sobbad from utter joy.

There was a dark figure they passed on their homeward drive who was powerless to work them any further ill. Tayra's malice and revenge were baffled. Whatever vows she had registered to wreak harm and woe on Prince Anatole's child could never further be carried out. Under the sweet May sunshine she had seen Zillah's face beam with its heavenly joy, for she had accepted love's religion and entered the enchanted region with another also under the spell.

The gipsy woman, whose rough passions and savage violence had urged her on to injure the whelpless, saw that Zillah was beyond her malice. She crept to the porch of the church and glanced inside. A few children still lingered and picked up some of the flowers strewn on the bride's path to-day. Thyra drew in her breath and lifted her head as if she saw the cold, mocking face of the prince by her side defying and defeating her schemes.

She had been cruel and merciless. She had urged Black David to murder the man she once loved, she had connived with Zillah's enemies and tricked and betrayed her whenever possible, but, after all, Zillah had conquered. The bright, beautiful flower turned from shade and obscurity to the sunlight. It claimed the world's homage and applause and held a lover captive to its charms.

Thyra sighed wearily and entered the church. A shaft of sunshine illumined the chancel and shadowy flecks of luminance strayed from the painted oriel window about the altar and lighted



[THE LAST PARTING.]

up these words written upon an ancient tablet: Vengeance is Mine. I will repay, saith the Lord.

Her eves were drawn to these words, and rested on them for a few seconds, as if in her ignorant way she realised the full force of their meaning.

"Vengeance is Mine. By what right do you seek to punish?" they seemed to say to her. "Whatever agony or infamy is visited on you in this world be patient. The avenging blow shall be struck alone by Me."

She trembled, glancing at the wreaths on the walls. A deadly pallor overspread her features. All her guilty secrets arose and faced her, The flame of life began to burn low in her veins. She was quite alone in the world, and any moment they might come for her and take her

to prison as they had taken Michael. She sank down on the altar steps and wept

with convulsed, dangerous violence.

Here they had both stood—Zillah and the duke—but a few minutes previously. Prince Anatole's daughter restored to her rights, her name, and possessions, while his son suffered the penalty of his crime. It hardly seemed just to her—it bewildered her brain. A few words read by a priest, a blessing, a ceremony, a ring, and all was secured. A rage born of wrong possessed her. The prince had been a traitor to his spoken word. She had been too ignorant, and, maybe, too proud to understand the natures of men such as he, who always forsake women

and forget them for a newer fancy.

It all seemed too bitter to be borne and live. She drew from the bosom of her dress a piece of crumpled paper and read something written on it.

It was a note sent to her by the prince in the days when he passed for the artist Bardo and they had lived together. She would then have suffered any torture, any privation for his sake. Had he bade her slay she would have arisen with the courage and strength of a lioness and obeyed. And yet he had been false and her just vengeance was baffled. She had sought to destroy but her victim had escaped.

By degrees she ceased to weep. The children, frightened at the wild and savage aspect of the ipsy woman with the awful pallor on the olive face, the lowering brows and the strange gestures, had gathered together at the church door watching her.

"Vengeance is Mine," she repeated, the weight on her heart increasing so that she shivered and a sudden blindness came before her

She lay back panting on the altar steps, her limbs gradually growing colder and colder and the weight on her heart changing to mortal agony. Then her breast heaved less, and a sharp cry rang around the church.

" She is mad," the children cried, flying from the spot and rushing to call assistance.

When the villagers came, hastily summoned by the terrified children, they found a dead woman lying on the floor of the church, her head upon the altar steps, while the wind had blown the flowers upon the miserable rags that covered her and added the last reflex of irony to her miserable end. A rose's sweet leaves touched her dead mouth and lilies encircled her head, and thus was her revenge consummated.

It was towards midsummer when the Duke and Duchess of Clydale returned to London to take part in the practical and exacting life of the world of fashion in which their social gifts well fitted them to shine. The duke had resolved that his aimless career should end and devoted his time and energies to something beyond an elegant dilettantism and acquaintance with the most cultured forms of art and literature.

He had all sorts of benevolent schemes for benefiting the human race and turned his attention to politics, and with all his natural brilliance and powers of enjoyment gave promiscofattaining material success in sterner forms of work than those which had formefly en-grossed his time. The study of political economy, the difficulties of governments may

not be so interesting as versifying or Parian satire to a would-be poet, but they roused his ambition in another field and gave him more

universal sympathy with the masses of mankind.

At one of the lodge gates leading to Rosendale a little old man might be seen pottering about the narrow paths looking at his roses or warming himself in the sun.

Red Reuben escaped his captors and by hisconfession won a free pardon. He exposed the guilt of Michael so effectively that the daring gipsy was ultimately tracked and taken prisoner just as he had been conveyed in a coffin on board a Liverpool steamer, thinking that gloomy receptacle the safest means of his native shores and that he could emerge

ceed

ougi thor

Pud

year

mar

on

valu

mar

wide

with

mar

Mrs

to c

flue

rep

way doc lool

tha

for

Fo

the

T

from it unseen when they were miles away.

But the detectives were one too many for him, and as they insisted on the coffin being opened Michael was dragged out amid the intense surprise of the spectators.

He was tried on several counts and found guilty, so as a convict with close-cropped hair and in the degrading livery of the prison he was taken care of by government as a number and no longer a man.

Lady Alesia's name was so disgracefully mixed up in the attempt to defraud Zillah of her rights that after listening very patiently to her forcible explanations Lord Carden cancelled his engagement, for what with the gossip in the papers and the tittle-tattle and slander going on in clubs his lordship found a hornet's nest

on in class his locality about him.

"The best thing you can do, my poor Alesia, is to go abroad till things blow over," he said, with dreary emphasis, "for they begin to look in the best through the best to be and only think very ugly indeed against you, and only think how they served Madame Rachel." He named that unfortunate woman because

she was the first who came into his head. Lady Alesia, mortally sensitive as to her com-

The last we heard of her was that she had entered a convent in Italy and taken the veil.

THE END.



THE PUDDLETON GIRLS.

THE DOCTOR'S FOES.

(A COMPLETE STORY).

CHAPTER I.

DOCTOR GRAY DISCUSSED.

"HE is a very clever young man and an exceedingly desirable medical attendant, but he ought to marry. No doctor can hope to have a thorough good practice if he remains single

That was Mrs. Puddleton's opinion, and Mrs. Puddleton being a lady of fifty, with thirty years of married life and a long string of unmarried daughters to provide for, her opinion on the subject of marriage was undoubtedly valuable.

"Doctors ought to be very careful whom they

marry."

That was the opinion of Mrs. Fowler, the widow of a clergyman, with only one daughter, with whom she feared to part. Mrs. Fowler never thought of the prospect of her Sybilla marrying without pain, being very much unlike Mrs. Puddleton in that respect, that lady being ready and willing to send all her children forth

to comfort and cheer men of position or money. "I don't think a doctor's wife has much in-

fluence on his practice," she said.

"She must have influence with the man," replied Mrs. Fowler, "and so, in an indirect doctor miserable at home is distracted abroad."

Mrs. Puddleton shrugged her shoulders and looked incredulous.

"You give men credit for more tenderness than they deserve," she said. "Abroad they forget their homes. Wives get all the frown; and strangers and acquaintances all the smiles." "I really cannot agree with you," said Mrs. Fowler.

"It doesn't matter whether you do or not, the facts remain the same. You lived with your them.

husband ten years; I have had thirty with mine and I have learnt exactly what men are."
With an emphatic nod Mrs. Puddleton arose

and took an affectionate leave of Mrs. Fowler, who, perhaps, was not very sorry to get rid of her.

At Stickington society was very limited, everybody knew everybody and everybody had to put up with everybody or create a sort of civil war in the little rural community.

In deep thought Mrs. Puddleton walked down the High Street, where stagnation reigned six days in the week and bucolic pandemonium when it was market day. There was nobody about except the ostler of the Green Dragon, who stood by the stable yard gate, meditatively chewing a straw, and the barber's bull terrier going homeward with a small piece of beef pur-loined from the butcher's. There never was a quieter place than Stickington.

Mrs. Puddleton lived in a big red and white house at the end of the little town, a pretentiouslooking place, with a funereal row of box trees in front and good stretch of stiffly kept garden in the rear.

She went round to a side gate and made her ray to the garden.

There were three girls upon the lawn, or three people who passed for girls. Miss Judith Pud-dleton, though full five-and-twenty, declined to admit having reached womanhood, and her two sisters deemed themselves quite youthful on the strength of having an elder unmarried sister.

The girls were practising archery, and, stretched upon the bench at full length watching them, was Bardulph Puddleton, aged twenty -the only boy in the family and a born booby. He had the additional advantage of being utterly spoiled.

The Puddletons were all strong framed and thickset—the girls especially so. They had that sturdy, immoveable look about them that, in the eyes of a civilised world, would give them the appearance of stout posts rooted in the ground, defying time and all things to upset or remove

Such a thing as an indisposed Puddleton had never been heard of.

"What risks you girls run," said Mrs. Puddleton, "practising archery in the heat of the

day."
"What is the use of our being afraid of freckles?" asked the second daughter, Margaret.

"We have as many as we can carry."

"I am not talking of freekles," replied her mother. "Judith! I declare you are quite pale. Give over for to-day."

"What can have come to mamma?" grumbled Judith, as she put aside her bow. "It is a little late in the day to be so particular about what we do."

"I find the sun oppressive," said Bardulph, with a sly twinkle in his eyes, "but you don't seem to be over anxious about me." "My dear boy," said Mrs. Puddleton,

"My dear boy," said Mrs. Puddleton, anxiously, "I am always anxious about you. Are you really indisposed?"

"Just a little," he replied; "but if you will send Mangles out with a glass of sherry I'll undertake to be right in no time. Where have you been this afternoon?"

"To Mrs. Fowler's."

"Did you see Sybilla?" asked Bardulph, with sudden interest.

"No, thank goodness," replied his mother. "It is bad enough to have to endure Mrs. Fow-ler without being afflicted with the namby-pamby daughter. But we must be polite to everyone

"Sybilla Fowler," remarked Judith, "is simply unbearable.'

"Awfully unbearable," said Bardulph, with a grin, "especially as every fellow for milesaround is spoons on her. I'm spoons on her."

"Bardulph!" exclaimed Mrs. Puddleton.

"Fact, I assure you," he said, coolly. "I'm clean gone-I am hit hard here"-Bardulph laid a hand upon the recognised region of his heart—"and I have a good mind to go in and

"You will please to remember, Bardulph," said his mother, with severity, "that Sybilla

mig

will

Mrs

nec

pos bec

doc

the

of i

F

out

fail

hav

for.

ton

and

Gra

stai

und qua E

pici

atte

bor

him

stuj

our

frie

hur

rigi

Syb

her

just

out

tha

cip

pec

evi

not

sion

not

You

in

a. c:

ma

wh:

cig

er I

8

Fowler is a penniless girl and that you have nothing but what your father allows you."

"And that's little enough," grumbled Bardulph, "but still I think we could do with it. People in love get along uncommonly cheap."
"I should consider it my duty, Bardulph, to

advise your father to stop your allowance the moment you LOOKED at Sybilla."

"Would you now really, mother? Well, sup-pose father didn't do it. I don't think he would, for he admires Sybilla almost as much as I do, and was only saying yesterday that she

was a pearl among___"
"Judith, my child," said Mrs. Puddleton, indignantly, turning away from her audacious son, "come in with me, you are not well."

"Oh, my," exclaimed Bardulph, rubbing his eyes, "poor thing; put her on three chops a day! They would last me and Sybilla a week."

His mother did not desire to speak to him further just then. What she had to say was reserved for her husband, who was known to all Stickington as the Martyr. One wag indeed had quietly set on foot a subscription to put a stained glass window in the church to be dedicated to Saint Puddleton, but the rector, akindly man, reproved the joker and stopped the circulation of the fictitious list of subscribers.

Accompanied by her daughter Mrs. Puddleton went into the house, carrying all sail before a stiff breeze. In the hall she met Mr. Puddleton, a man of solid frame and the stolid expression of one who bears torture doggedly. He saw a storm coming and retreated magnificently before

the clouds could break.

"Never mind," said Mrs. Puddleton, after
"Never mind," said mrs. return. "I will calling upon him in vain to return. "I will talk to him bye-and-bye. Gome into the breakfast-room."

Thither mother and daughter adjourned and sat down, Judith knowing full well that something of importance was coming, and wondered what it would be.

" Judith, you are not well."

"That is the third or fourth time you have told me so, mother."

"And I repeat it. You are palpably indisposed, and I think I ought to call in Doctor Gray to see you. He is very clever"—Mrs. Puddleton was speaking very slowly now-" very clever, the best man hereabout. But he ought to marry. All medical men ought to be mar-

The light of intelligence dawned in Judith's eye, and she saw which way the motherly wind was blowing. She assented to the remarks made most fervently.

"We have always said Doctor Gray ought to have a wife-Maryanne, and Rebecca, and all our friends."

"It was unwise to talk of it before your friends."

"Why, mother?"

"Has Doctor Gray ever shown you any particular attention?

" He has always been kind and amiable."

"I thought so. When he meets me he always inquires with great interest-I may say affection after you. It rests with yourself, Judith, whether his love is to languish or to be brought to fruition. Meanwhile, as you are unwell I had better ask him to call."

Judith had nothing to urge against such a Making every allowance for a mother's prejudiced eyes she thought there might be something in the doctor's kind inquiries, and laid herself out to make the best of a very slight indisposition.

A servant took a note to the doctor, who lived in a quiet house in the heart of the town with an old servant for a housekeeper. When he opened and read the request within he involuntarily exclaimed :

"What can ail that bouncing girl? I thought she was sickness proof.

Luckily nobody heard him, and the man was sent back with a verbal message that the doctor would call upon his unexpected patient within

CHAPTER II

MARING AN ENEMY.

DOCTOR GRAY had advantages both intellectual and physical. In mind he was far above the run of ordinary country doctors, who are men with a scarcity of brains, backed up by combined stupidity and limited experience, and had all the talent requisite to make a name in the metropolis.

In body, he was above the middle beight, well proportioned in figure, with a look of endurance about him. He was a man who seldom tired, and thought nothing a trouble, when he had the sick and ailing to watch over.

The day was warm, and attired in a light coat and soft felt hat, he decended the steps of his home and, pausing in the street, looked up and down in an undecided manner. He had two calls upon him, one of duty and the other plea-

The call of pleasure lay in the knowledge I The carror pleasure my in the sale of Sybilla being very likely to be on her way back from visiting some friends, and Sybilla's face had a great charm for the doctor. He did not think he was in love, but it was the one thing in Stickington that never failed to cheer him if he was at all weary and sad.

And he was very often both. The place cramped him. Stickington offered but a poor dd for his energies, and he was as yet too poor to risk a move to a wider one. Hance the lowness of spirits that comes of an ambitious purpose laid aside and the drudgery of a weary life with but little charm in it.

The call of duty was to see the ailing Judith, and after a little struggle with himself he de-cided she could wait. Turning up the street, he walked rapidly out of the town, and in a qu part of the road arched over with trees he be held the object of his search.

Sybilla, slight and graceful, almost girlish in figure indeed, was approaching him, engaged in the arrangement of a bouquet of wild flowers she had gathered on the way. Wrapt in her simple task, she did not perceive him until his shadow fell upon her.

"Oh, Doctor Gray, how you have startled me," she exclaimed.
"A thousand pardons, Miss Fowler," he said.

"You were busy and I was thoughtless.
a pretty bouquet—and all wild flowers."

'The best of flowers. Are they not?" she said, simply.
"I believe so.

I have a sincere admiration for anything that is quiet and natural. are going home?"
Yes."

"I am but loitering here for a moment. May I return with you? I so seldom get a sensible person to talk with me."

"But surely you don't call ME sensible," she answered, opening her large grey eyes in amaze-

"Indeed I do. You are one both sensible and sensitive. You have dropped a flower."
"Oh! thank you."

"No, I am not going to give it to you. I want to keep it. May I?"

"Will you wear it for a button-hole?" asked

Sybilla, with a smile.

"Ay! that I will right willingly, but you must place it there."

With simple bonhomie Sybilla performed the office, standing upon tiptoe, and so wrapt in the performance of her amiable office as to be unconscious of the admiring look in his eyes as he gazed down upon her.

"There," she said, "you have your little bunch of Star of Bethlehem, and all Stickington will be up in arms on seeing Dector Gray with a

"I have, as a rule, no object in wearing one," he said.

Nobody to please over there you mean," Sybilla suggested " Yes. I am too lazy to adorn myself. Shall

I carry your flowers for you? " No, indeed, that would be too much. Doctor Gray with a buttonhole isas much as Stickington will bear for one day."

He laughed good-humouredly, and they turned back together, he accommodating his usual hurried stride to the slower pace of Sybilla. He had very little to say for himself. Somehow the fountains of conversation appeared to be dried up within him, but Sybilla talked of where she had been and what she had seen, and of other and sundry matters of her simple life.

"Mamma thinks of giving a garden party," she said, as they entered the town. "We must entertain a little, and that is an economical way of entertaining one's friends. But you never

attend them."

"I am not asked to all," he replied. "But when you are asked you don't come."
"Ask me to yours, and if I refuse cut me
as a churlish friend."

You will really come?" "Indeed I will-that is, unless I have some body seriously ill to attend. But I begin to despair. Stickington is far too healthy a place for a doctor to do much good in. I think I must leave it.'

"Shall I fall ill to oblige you?" asked Sybilla, with a quizzical look.

"Don't jest, young lady, on such a serious subject. You may have occasion for my services before long. Here is Judith Pudal to ill—a thing to really wonder at."

" Judith ill?" exclaimed Sybilla. "What is

the matter with her?"
"That is just what I am going to find out I can," he said, "and here we are at the pure, so I must say good bye."

He took her hand and held it in his just a if I can,"

fraction longer than was necessary, and for the first time the eyes of Sybilla could not look charlessly into his. Something brought a quivering of the heart's action and a feeling of shyness upon her. The "Good bye" faded to a mere whisper on her lips, and she hurried

Come, Eustace Gray, this won't do," muttered the young doctor as he thoughtfully crossed the street. "This is not the programme you have laid out for yourself. A young wife would be all very well, but how are you to keep her?-how fight your way up the tree at the top of which is fame? But stop, my friend. Don't think of a wife unless you are sure the girl would have you."

Eyes—angry eyes—were looking at him from a first-floor window of the Puddleton House. There were two pair-one belonging to Mrs. Puddleton and the other to Judith.

"This man is a flirt, I.declare," said Mrs.
Puddleton, very hot in look and temper. "Judith, I am almost sorry I sent for him."

"A man who never flirts—never marries,"

remarked Judith.

"True, my dear, I forgot that. Compose yourself. I hear his footstep on the stairs."

The gentle but rather ponderous Judith com posed herself into what she hoped was a languid attitude on the sofa, and Mrs. Puddleton sat down by her side, holding her hand. The doctor was ushered in and marvelled as he looked upon the touching spectacle.

"I am sorry you have had to send for me," he said; "I trust it is nothing serious."

"You may not think it worth leaving PLEASANT SOCIETY for," Mrs. Puddleton said, "but I am

naturally anxious about my children."
"Of course you are," he said, his said, his conscience pricking him for having wilfully neglected the suffering Judith. "Give me your hand—cool—and the pulse." He pulled out his watch and sat half a minute in silence. "Well, the pulse sat half a minute in silence. "Well, the pulse is seventy-six-perfect for a woman I should say. May I see your tongue? Nothing the matter there. What have you been doing to-

day?" Practising archery," Judith replied, in a

"In the sun ?"

" Yes.

"And you feel a little giddiness and dimness of the sight."

"Those are the very symptoms," replied the gentle Judith. "Ah!" he said, rising, "I see what it is-a little over-heating. It is not at all serious

might indeed be called triffing. I will send you a draught round. Take it at bed-time and you will find yourself quite well to-morrow."

"But you will call again, won't you?" asked

ned

He

the ied she her

ust

ray

me

me

to

ked

ons

t is

the

300

of

ied

nt.

illy

rife

the

Irs.

Irs.

28,"

080

uid

tor

oon

e,"

NT

the

cool

mo

uld

to-

ı a

ess

the

"But you will call again, won't you?" asked Mrs. Puddleton.
"No, indeed," he replied, "it is quite unnecessary, I assure you. It would be gross imposition to do so. If there is one thing I dread becoming more than another it is a calling doctor—one who is ever worrying his patients for the sake of his paltry fee. There is too much the sake of his paltry fee. There is too much of it about. I assure you there is very little the matter with your daughter. Good day."

He left them as coolly as he would have walked

out of a labourer's cottage.

So Mrs. Puddleton wrathfully said when he was gone, and Judith shed bitter tears over the was gone, and Judith shed other tears over the failure of the little project.

She went so far as to accuse her mother of having needlessly humiliated her.

"My dear," said Mrs. Puddleton, "how can

you be so unjust? But I will avenge this insult. I will punish him for having slighted you. As for his physic I will throw it away the moment

And in carrying out her threats Mrs. Puddle-ton was as good as her word.

CHAPTER III.

SO EASILY RUINED.

ALL society in Stickington was whispering. and it was whispering strange things of Doctor

Gray.

It was said of him that he was not quite so staid and sober as he ought to be, and that he, starior, concealed the

under a very quiet exterior, concealed the qualities of a gay Lothario. Everybody had thought so, but individually they had been loth to give vent to their sus-

picions, so everybody said.

"Certainly a young man is not a fit medical attendant for a young woman," said Miss Chittleborough, aged forty-nine. "I can never have him again."

But it is not worth while to record all the

stupid things said of him, and we will confine ourselves to what Mrs. Puddleton told all her dear

friends in confidence.

The veracity of it will be at once apparent.

"As a mother I do not like to speak of the humiliation of my own child, but I think it right to tell you that he has trifled with my Judith, and I have seen him dancing after Sybilla Fowler every day in the week, squeezing her hand in the street and locking in the street and locking in the street. her hand in the street, and looking into her eyes just like—like—what he is."

So the good people gathered together, leaving out Mrs. Fowler for some reason, and decided that Doctor Gray was an unfit person to hold the important position of a medical man, and Mr.
Roger Duffin, another practitioner, whose principal merits were that he was married, henpecked, short-sighted, and a little given to drink,
found his practice suddenly increase.

Eustace Gray lost his, and wondered what

evil tide had set in against him, but he said

nothing.

Not even to Mrs. Fowler, on whom he occasionally called in a friendly way, and she hearing nothing from those concerned he was ignorant of the change an evil tongue had wrought in the young doctor's welfare.

The day for her garden party came round, and in the morning Sybilla met him in the street sauntering along with his hands behind him and a cigarette in his mouth.

The sight was so unexpected and so decidedly unprofessional that she stared at him in dis-

may. "Doctor Gray," she exclaimed, "do you know

"Yes," he replied. "I am smoking a cigarette."

"But you never smoke in the morning. Doctors never do. What will your patients think of you?"

"What they please," he replied, jauntily.
"It's all right, I assure you; I will tell you all about it this afternoon."

"Then you will be able to come?"

"I assure you there is nothing whatever to detain me."

Sybilla was very glad he was coming, but she was sorry to see him so changed.

She did not care for "serious" people, those very good persons who decline to recognise that existence is enjoyable, and would turn the world into one vast Wailing Place if they could.

The doctor was not one of them. His serious.

ness had been the true form of earnestness, and he was not averse to mirth in due season.

But that was a different thing to sauntering along the High Street like an ordinary lounger smoking at an early hour.

Sybilla was appalled, and hurried home to bear the strange tidings to her mother.

"It is odd," said Mrs. Fowler, when the story was told her, "so unlike him in every way.

The very antipodes of his usual conduct."

"His life at home must be very lonely," said
Sybilla, piteously. "Do you think—that—his
mind is at all affected? Oh, how dreadful that

"I cannot think so, Sybilla. He has a mind of more than ordinary strength. There is some reason for his conduct. He said he would explain it this afternoon?'

"Yes, mother."

"Then we will wait patiently till then and not alarm ourselves."

The weather being propitious all promised well for the party, and at an early hour the

guests began to appear.

The Puddletons came almost first, being beaten only by a neck by Miss Chittleburgh, who always made it a rule on these occasions to show early and get a seat near the refreshment tent She liked tea and claret cup, and was a gourmand with sponge cakes, trifles, and ices.

The Puddleton girls were dressed in cream-

coloured walking dresses, trimmed in a lightning-

and-thunder fashion with maroon.

They had hats to match, and parasols that ought to have been joys for ever if they were not

exactly things of beauty.

Bardulph accompanied them, and as he had a violently red head of hair he very appropriately dressed himself in a very light suit, and wore a

neck-tie of dazzling green.

Bardulph was bent that day on making some impression upon Sybilla, and he succeeded—only

impression upon Sybilla, and he succeeded—only it was not exactly the impression he anticipated. "Mother's coming a little later on," he said to Mrs. Fowler, "and the governor hopes you will excuse him, as he has a toothache—"
"Headache," corrected Judith.
"Yes, to be sure, headache. He generally has something, you know. Mother keeps him well stocked with aches of one sort and another."
The cub thought this was an axellent iches.

The cub thought this was an excellent joke and laughed, but not having any support he fell back a little to talk to Sybilla.

At any other time she would have snubbed this gay young gentleman, but being in her own home and he a guest she could not be less than

polite to him.

Bardulph was delighted to find he was not snubbed at the first set off, and launched forth into a perfect sea of brilliant conversation-the brilliancy consisting of the personalities with

which his talk was garnished.
"There's Miss Chittleburgh as usual," he said, "next door to the buns and goodies. I believe that old woman lives on what she

pockets and carries away. "It is not kind to jest at poverty," Sybilla

"Well, no," he said, "I daresay not, but a fellow must have a shie at something, and old maids are fair marks for everybody. By the

way have you seen the doctor to-day?"
"Which doctor?" asked Sybilla, colouring slightly. "We have more than one."

slightly. "We have more than one."
"On! Of course you don't know which one
"certainly not. You said Bardulph, banteringly, "certainly not. You haven't the least suspicion that I am alluding to Doctor Gray. He seems to me to be out

on the booze."
"Out on-what?" asked Sybilla, with an

angry flush.
"On the booze—on the spree," said Bardulph.

"He's here about all day with his hands in his pockets smoking, and I dareasy having brandy—and—sodas. I rather expect to see him turn up here in a regular cobbley-wobbley state."

Sybilla dare not ask what he meant by "cobbley-wobbley," and the bare idea of accepting the suggestion that arose in her mind terrified by State of the state of the suggestion of the suggestion of the state of the suggestion of the sugges

terrified her. She would sooner have seen him lying dead than intoxicated.

But why should she be so interested in him? He was no more to her than any other friend or acquaintance, and what he did was no concern of hers, but it was vexing to think that he should

She had no time to think more. of people were arriving and she had to help her mother to receive them.

Society at Stickington was on the whole a fearful and wonderful thing. They were all great people who looked down upon a great deal and up to nothing, and had such high ways and so much etiquette and such laws of precedence that it was a wonder the nobles of the land did not come down there to get a few lessons in general deportment.

Hitherto old Doctor Duffin had only been admitted as it were by the side door, but the down-fall of Eustace Gray had opened the front gates to him and he was received with open arms. His somewhat bibulous appearance was not im-proved by a huge white tie and frilled shirt, both affording a dangerous contrast to his over rosy cheeks and illuminated nose.

But everybody said he had a fine head-a thing they never observed before-and Miss Chittleburgh declared that he reminded her of

Doctor Johnson. Bardulph, who in the exercise of his wit was occasionally honest, was of opinion that he looked like the waiter at the Green Dragon dressed for a masquerade.

The good people were assembled and only one was wanted. The clock had struck four and Doctor Gray had not appeared. There were whispers of his name about, and it was said he would not come.

Mrs. Puddleton told Miss Chittleburgh that

he dare not.

"Can he come here," she said, "and look upon his work? Dare he meet the eye of my Judith ?

"Men," replied Miss Chittleburgh, "have

impudence enough for anything. This opinion was immediately verified by the appearance of Doctor Gray. He came into the garden with a leisurely air, looked coolly around him until he espied Mrs. Fowler, who was hastening to greet him.
"How do you do, Doctor Gray?"

"How are you, Mrs. Fowler?"
They shook hands and he went over to Sybilla, who was talking with Mrs. Duffin—a lady with a countenance of the Roman order of architec-ure—who promptly turned her back upon him.

"I have availed myself of your kind invita-tion, Miss Fowler," he said, "but I fear I shall not be able to stay. I have to catch the five-o'clock train for London."

He spoke loud enough for all around him to hear, and a buzz of surprise ran round the circle. Sybilla echoed "to London?" and then there

"Yes, to London," he replied—"and for cod. It is time that I and Stickington parted, for Stickington has for some inscrutable reasen turned its back upon me, even as Mrs. Duffin did just now."

"And suppose I did, what then?" asked Mrs. Duffin, wheeling round.

"Do not be angry, my dear madame," he said, "and you, Miss Fowler, forgive me. I have no wish to make a scene here, but I could not resist the temptation to have a word with all my old friends-all that were my friendsbefore I go."

He paused, and Sybilla saw there was a sus-picion of tears in his eyes as if he suffered some intense pain and strove to hide it. There was a slight quavering in his voice as he went on.
"How I have offended everybody I know

not," he said, "but that I have done so is a fact. I cannot fight against such a fact. I

have lost my good name among you. My good name is my breed, and without it I must go and try to live elsewhere. Will nobody tell me what I have done before I go?"

Nobody attempted to do so. Indeed all there felt it would be difficult to put their accusations

into a definite form.

Miss Chittleburgh, who had no formal complaint against him, was however one of the most venomous, and she whispered to Mrs. Puddle-

"Speak out—cast your Judith in his teeth." But Mrs. Puddleton declined to use her daughter as a weapon, for very obvious reasons, and hurriedly replied:

"Think of a mother's feelings. How could I drag the secrets of my home into the daylight

"I see you will not tell me," said Eustace Gray. "I had a hope you would, so that I might clear up all things and leave with the goodwill of everybody. But I must say adieu without it. Good bye, Mrs. Fowler—good bye, Sybilla."

They knew not what to say to him, and he was gone ere they had cleared their minds of the confusion his words had wrought there.

The good company sat staring at each other until the sound of his footsteps died away. Then Doctor Duffin found tongue.

"This is one of the strangest varieties of abberration of the mind I have ever met with," he

said, "or perhaps it is drink."
"You ought to know if it is so," Bardulph

politely remarked.

The doctor turned and tried to stare him down, but Bardulph was encased with the iron armour of unlimited impudence and was lookproof.

Meanwhile a dozen tongues had been loosened and the late scene rapidly and fervently dis-

cussed.

At first they blamed Eustace Gray, but little by little conscience worked upon some and good nature asserted itself with others. They knew no real ill of him; he had always been kind, was clever and attentive, and the general feeling

now was of sorrow that he was gone. "All I have to say to you," said said Bardulph, speaking in a general way, "is this. Don't any of you fall ill or I don't know what will become of you," and as he spoke he met the glaring eye

of the bibulous Doctor Duffin fearlessly.
"Doctor Gray was a gentleman," said Mrs.
Fowler, "and will be a loss to Stickington. I personally shall miss him very much."
"And so shall I," said Sybilla, naively

Mrs. Puddleton heard the remark and smiled

in secret joy.

"Whatever injustice there may be in getting rid of him," she said to Judith, "we have at least spoilt that little minx's plans."

But Judith did not reply. Young people are seldom really venomous and spiteful, and she was sorry to think how much she was responsible for the leaving of the once popular Doctor Gray.

CHAPTER IV.

ANOTHER SIN.

"Do your objections to Sybilla Fowler still hold good?" asked Bardulph of his mother a year later, when Doctor Gray was almost for-

"It would pain me if you ever thought of her,"

she replied.

The whole family except the younger members were at breakfast when the son and heir of the house of Puddleton put his question, and the answer he received was followed by a giggle of satisfaction from the girls.

Mr. Pudaleton, seeing there was a subject on board that might bring him into trouble with his better half, took an old letter out of his pocket and read it upside down.

"So you have not changed your mind," said Bardulph, buttering a slice of dry toast. "Well, I suppose I ought to be glad or sorry or something. I proposed to her yesterday.

Mrs. Puddleton had just raised the teapot with

the object of pouring out some tea. With a bang that made all the tea things and plates rattle she put it down again.

Mr. Puddleton nervously turned the letter round and had a look at it sideways. "I see," said Mrs. Puddleton; "you did it at "I see," said Mrs. Puddleton; "you did it at the instigation of your father. Don't deny it,

Bardulph. I know you wish to screen him."
"No—I don't," said her hopeful son. "He advised me not to do it"—Mr. Puddleton looked up with a grateful smile and made a mental vow that his heir should have an extra five-pound note--" but I would do it, and I got my congé."

"She refused you !" exclaimed all the girls, in

think of her," replied Bardulph, easily, "and laughed at me."

"The minx!" exclaimed Mrs. Puddleton.
"Now don't be unreasonable," said Bardulph.

"She doesn't please you any way. If she had accepted me you would have been furious. Now she refuses me you call her hard names."

"Well, I must say she is a fool then," said Mrs. Puddleton. "She won't get such another

"I should think not," said Bardulph, complacently, "but the secret of it is she is in correspondence with that Gray who left here."

Here was another subject for angry suspicion, and everybody but Bardulph and his father wondered at her indiscretion, knowing that she

would be sure to be found out.

"And in clandestine correspondence I should added Bardulph, when the buzzing had subsided. "The postman gave her the letter at the door and she blushed and looked round as she took it. I saw the handwriting and knew it, quick as she was in popping it into her pocket."
"Poor Mrs. Fowler," sighed Mrs. Puddleton,
"her time of real trouble is advancing."

"But don't say anything about it, for goodness' sake," said Bardulph, "or you will have a deputation of old busybodies going down to the girl to give her a moral lecture."
"I think," said Mrs. Puddleton, "that Mrs.

Fowler ought to be made aware of this clandestine correspondence. It is due to her that somebody should tell her, due to Stickington, due to society at large.

Mr. Puddleton unhappily made a remark. "I don't think much good would come of in-rfering," he said, and Mrs. Puddleton, who terfering," wanted somebody to worry, fell upon him.

He was asked sundry questions that had nothing to do with the case and he was accused of a long string of social crimes that in a court of law would have required an indictment half a mile long. He was told he was neither a husband, father, friend, nor anything but a worldlyminded, base, scheming, heartless creature in the form of a man.

The family rapidly melted away before the storm, and when it was over Mr. Puddleton, conscious of having played a manly part by offering not a word in reply, retired to his study consolation in a mild cheroot.

Bardulph had spoken nothing but the truth. Eustace Gray and Sybilla were corresponding, and at the very hour of the Puddleton family discussion she was in a sweet, secluded bower in the garden at home reading and re-reading

a very precious epistle.

"My darling Sybilla—"

"His darling Sybilla," she said, pausing and stooping down a little so as to get a peep at the sky. "Clever Doctor Gray's darling. How odd it seems—and yet how nice. But I don't think I shall get used to it—until I—have—seen—him—again."

Returning to the letter she perused it half aloud, very much as if she were anxious to get it by heart, as perhaps she might be. There are certain precious letters one receives in a life-time that we are not willing to forget a

"You will be glad to learn that I have secured the support of Lord Landville, which gives me about the best chance for the appointment. The board meets to-morrow and then I shall be arraigned before them and examined and crossexamined as to my qualifications, and then in

the evening I shall know all. Say nothing just yet. We had better keep our little secret to burselves," and then followed the usual thing. Very pretty and very interesting to those con-cerned, but terrible slow reading to those not in-

dividually interested.

This did not read like a first letter, nor indeed was it one. Eustace Gray had not been gone a week when he wrote to Sybilla and she had answered his letter. So matters had been going on for a whole year unknown to Stickington when Bardulph Puddleton by accident saw and recognised the handwriting upon an envelope for Sybilla.

When she had finished the letter Sybilla read it again, and to be sure she had extracted all the honey of it she went over it again, then folded it up, placed it in her bosom and in-dulged in a little dreaming.

Very pretty she looked in her modest morning at the back and held together by something invisible. It was a pity nobody was there to look into her large grey eyes, full of melting tenderness and light of hope belonging to a first and all-absorbing love.

"His darling, yes, it is nice, I wouldn't be any other person's darling for the world. As for that Bardulph Puddleton it is a mercy I did not box his ears. The ape! I don't think I dare tell Eustace of his audacity. He would kill him." Her idea of the probable wrath of Eustace

Gray was founded upon what she had read in story books of the olden times wherein all true lovers are depicted as irate, resentful individuals running their rapier into those who had the audacity to cast sheep's eyes at their lady loves. It is very doubtful if Eustace, who was a very sensible fellow, would not have laughed at Bardulph's futile effort to get a wife.

Sybilla was still thinking when her mother's voice reached her ear, calling her by name. Mrs. Fowler, with a sun hat tilted over her nose and an empty flower basket, came gliding round the

houses to where she sat.
"Now, Miss Idle," she said, "nothing done as yet. Not a flower for the vases cut, and we are going to the picnic to-day."

"I don't want to go to the pienic," Sybilla

"It is a public duty," said Mrs. Fowler, with mock gravity, "once a year doth all Stickington go forth in a body to the sylvan woods, there to partake of gritty sandwiches, underdone mutton, overkept lobsters and bad champagne. It is a feast and a sacrifice, a very great sacrifice of somebody's reputation if nothing else."

"I suppose they always kill somebody's good

"Always, since I joined the happy band. But away, Sybilla, to your labours or we shall not be at the trysting spot."

The Stickington pienic was the acknowledged great affair of the place, as you may have gained from what Mrs. Fowler said; everybody went, that is all Stickington society, and it was generally assumed to be an occasion of great mirth and festivity.

But in sober truth everybody in private loathed the excursion and said bad things of the caterers of past years and gave way to gloomy forbodings concerning the one who had the immediate festivity in hand. The caterers were chosen by lot and this year it fell upon Bardulph Puddleton.

Bardulph could make a salad, and all that morning he was engaged in making a large one in a tin bucket which he afterwards drafted off into sundry jars and pickle bottles. The Misses Puddleton cut the sandwiches, and with their own appetites in mind cut them thick. Mrs. Puddleton mixed the claret cup as meagrely as she dare, and Mr. Puddleton took advantage of the family activity to smoke away

the morning.
At noon all Stickington was alive. Every thing in the form of conveyance that place could boast of was pressed into the service of the presumed merrymakers and all the boys ran out to cheer lustily as each successive body drove

away.

Behold them there assembled on the top of a

hill co surrou Bar. justly stands screw a row 66 Si duty. fellows Mrs. F 66 D "I

J

bolder boldne "Yo all." The she lay slice o ce Tf knowi M » clande

Gray,

"she

Puddle

" M letters ce It. with a But neighl glass (but th horror Eye and he 911 And prevai

She

ee I

upon s

thinks Sticki Sybill botton The its wo The and fo The

a doul

and i

He

accord Wit draws half a Mrs Duffin cold. blastusnal cc A

a har broug "P natur is not "B says I

ton sa for a other " N

"the

hill commanding a view of Stickington and its surroundings, the luncheon laid out, and Bardulph with the light of eye only seen in a justly proud salad maker emptying the jars and bottles into a linge bowl. Behind him stands Doctor Duffin lovingly fingering a cork-screw and fixing an avariciously thirsty eye upon a row of bottles

"Sit down, ladies, and now, gentlemen, do your

Thus spoke Bardulph, and the feast of good fellowship began. With the first mouthful Mrs. Puddleton whispered to Mrs. Duffin:

"Do you see any change in Sybilla Fowler?"
"I think I do," replies the doctor's wife, she has filled out lately."

"I don't mean that," impatiently rejoins Mrs. Puddleton, "doesn't it strike you that she looks bolder, more impudent looking!

"She has more nerve certainly, and it may be boldness."

"You would say it was boldness if you knew all."

The curiosity of Mrs. Duffin is stimulated, but she lays it aside until she has disposed of a large slice of ham. Then she lets it free. "If I knew all! Is there anything worth

knowing?"

"My dear Mrs. Duffin, she is carrying on a clandestine correspondence with that Doctor Gray, who ran away from here last year."
"Is that a fact?"

"My son Bardulph has seen some of their

tters. Don't ask me what is in them."
"It is no business of mine," says Mrs. Duffin, with a shrug.

But nevertheless she tells the story to her neighbour, who passes it on, and ere the second glass of champagne has been drunk everybody but those concerned has heard it. A general

horror and suppressed indignation prevail.

Eyes once friendly look askance at Sybilla, and her mother finds a general chill sitting upon

And yet the day is fine and warmth ought to prevail.

She casts about for the cause, and finally hits upon something near the truth.

She sees that it lies with her and Sybilla.

"I wonder what new falsehood is afloat," she

thinks, and smiles.

She personally does not care a fig for all Stickington, but she doesn't like the idea of Sybilla's reputation being bad anywhere.

She thinks she will endeavour to get at the bottom of the mystery.

The luncheon is over and the wine has done its work.

The party generally are in a good humour, and for a while indignation is checked.

The doctor, with more than his usual share of a doubtful vintage within him, volunteers a song, and is asked by his wife, sotto voce, if he is

He says he is perfectly sane, and is told to act

accordingly.

With a discretion beyond his years he withdraws his offer, and having quietly appropriated half a bottle of wine retires to the wood to drink

Mrs. Fowler, Mrs. Puddleton, and Mrs. Duffin get together, the two latter just a little cold, like warm natures chilled by a passing blast-Mrs. Fowler amiable and sparkling as usnal

"A gathering of this sort," she says, "is like a happy family. All sorts of dispositions are brought together and made to dwell in harmony by nature.

"Position is the thing that is studied, not the nature of persons," Mrs. Duffin says, "nature is not much without art."

"But art has to go to nature for everything," says Mrs. Fowler.

"I go to nature for very little," Mrs. Puddle-ton says, "and sometimes people who go to her for a great deal are not so simpleminded as others may think."

"Now it is coming," thinks Mrs. Fowler.

"For my part," continues Mrs. Puddleton,
"the world is so full of deceit that I stand appalled. Even the young cannot be trusted."

nothing.

She waits to know what the offence is and from whence it springs.

"Take Doctor Gray for instance," says Mrs. Puddleton, with a quick glance at Mrs. Duffin, "how he imposed upon us all."

quietly asks Mrs. Fowler.

"Oh, you know the story, and even now he cannot let us alone." "Indeed.

Mrs. Fowler is very quiet now.
"No," says Mrs. Puddleton, "and he is carry. on a clandestine correspondence with a lady

"That," says Mrs. Fowler, "I know is an error of yours.

"It is no error," replies Mrs. Puddleton, hotly, "for I know those who have seen the letters arrive at your house

"At my house?" says Mrs. Fowler, "for my daughter, I presume?"

"Yes, to your daughter."
"And what crime is there in his sending a letter ? They are engaged to be married, and have been so for quite two months.

Mrs. Puddleton is fairly taken aback, and Mrs. Duffin enjoys her discomfiture hugely. It does not matter to her who suffer so that there is enjoyment to be got out of it.

"They have a secret from me," says Mrs. Fowler, rising, "and what it is I shall know in a day or two. I will not keep you in suspense but immediately let you know what it is."

. A few days afterwards Mrs. Puddleton received the following letter:

"DEAR MRS. PUDDLETON,-The secret between my daughter and Dr. Gray is now made known to me. He applied for a very lucrative appointment under Government, and he has been successful. As it is imperative that he should settle near where his duty is, he and Sybilla will be united as soon as possible. We shall be happy to see you and your eldest daughter at the wedding.—Yours truly, shall be happy to see ... Yours truly, daughter at the wedding. —Yours truly, "Agatha Fowler."

You will scarcely credit it, but Mrs. Puddleton went with a host of other hypocrites to the mar-riage feast, and wished the happy pair all sorts of good things, and neither Eustace nor Sybilla care a straw whether they were honest or not, for they had sufficient joy in themselves to make life very pleasant to them, and they went away from Stickington a radiant pair.

And they are happy now

Eustace Gray has gained both fame and for-tune, and his wife is as dear to him as ever.

They have additional links of love in the form of three children, and what more than such a lot as theirs could mortal desire?

OUR COLUMNS FOR THE CURIOUS.

A FIGHT JUSTIFIED .- The other evening a citizen of Detroit beckoned to his twelve-yearold son to follow him to the woodshed, and when they had arrived he began :—"Now, young man, you have been fighting again. How many times have I told you it is disgraceful to fight?" "Oh, father, this wasn't about marbles or anything of the kind," replied the boy. "I can't help it. It's my duty to correct you. Take off your coat!" "But, father, the boy I was fighting with called me names." "Can't help it; calling names don't hurt any one. Off with that coat! names don't nurt any one. Off with that coat!"
"He said I was the son of a wire-puller."
"What! what!s that?" "And he said you was an office hunter!" "What, what loafer dared make that assertion?" "It made me awfully mad, but I didn't say anything. Then he called you a hireling!" "Called me hireling, why I'd like to get my hands on him!" nuffed the you a hireling!" "Called me hireling, why I'd like to get my hands on him!" puffed the old gent. "Yes, and he said you was a political

"It is Sybilla," Mrs. Fowler sees, but says | lickspittle!" "Wouldn't I like to have the training of that boy for about five minutes? wheezed the old man as he hopped around. put up with that," continued the boy, "and then he said you laid your pipes for office, and got left by a large majority. I couldn't stand that, father, and so I sailed over the fence and licked him baldheaded in less'n two minutes. Thrash me if you must, father, but I couldn't stand it to hear you abused by one of the malignant opposition." "My son," said the father, as he felt for half a dollar with one hand and wiped his eyes with the other, "you may go out and buy yourself two pounds of candy. It is wrong to fight, but allowance must be made for political campaigns and the vile slanders of

the other party."

STORY OF VAN ARTEVELDE.—Jacques
Ghont, was a fai STORY OF VAN ARTEVELDE.—Jacques van Artevelde, the Brewer of Gnent, was a faithful ally of Edward the Third of England, who used familiarly to call him "his dear gossip," and the Queen Philippa stood godmother to his son Philip. It was at his suggestion that Edward assumed the title of King of France, and quartered the fleurs de lis with the arms of England, from which they were not removed till the end of the last century-as recently noticed in Columns for the Curious. The English connection was in the end fatal to Van Artevelde, and led to his been killed by the citizens whom he had so often led as easily as sheep by his talents, courage, and eloquence. In 1344 ne had so often led as easily as sheep by his talents, courage, and eloquence. In 1344 Edward the Third crossed the Sluis at the invitation of Jacques, who, relying on his influence with the citizens, had promised to make him lord and heritor of Flanders. But this pro-posal was distasteful to the men of Ghent, who were unwilling to disinherit their natural lord; and during Van Artevelde's absence to confer with Edward the popular discontent against him, increased by rumours that during his administration of the affairs of Flanders he had secretly sent large sums of money out of the country to England, was excited to a high degree and "set them of Gaunt on fire." As he rode into the town about noon the people knew of his coming, and many were assembled in the street where he should pass, and when they saw him they began to murmur, and to put their heads together and they said, "Behold yonder great master, who will order all Flanders according to his pleasure, which thing is not to be endured. As he rode through the street he perceived that there was some new matter against him, for he saw such as were wont to make reverence to him as he came by turn their backs towards him and enter into their houses. Then he began to doubt, and as soon as he was alighted in his lodging he closed fast his doors, gates, and windows. Scarcely was this done but all the street was full of men, and especially those of street was full or men, and especially those of the small crafts, who assailed his house both behind and before. Though stoutly resisted, their numbers prevailed. Artevelde in vain addressed them from an upper window; the eloquent tongue was now little heeded in the frenzy of popular excitement. "When Jacques saw that he could not appease them," says the old chronicler Froissart, "he drew in his head and closed the window, and so thought to steal out at the back into a church adjoining his house, but it was so broken that four hundred people were entered in, and finally there he was taken and slain without mercy, and one Thomas Denys gave him his death stroke.' Many military and commercial treaties were made the English by the Arteveldes; they aided each other with troops on land and ships at sea; and the near connection between the two countries was not broken off finally until the time of Philip the Bold. In 1338-9 Ghent was the residence of Edward the Third of England and family, and his Queen Philippa here gave birth to her renowned son John of Gaunt, who has been immortalised in Shakespeare. The story of Van Artevelde has been told in Sir Henry Taylor's drama.

BRUSSELS LACE.—The most remarkable manufacture at Brussels is that of lace, celebrated all over the world. The peculiarity, in addition to the fineness, which distinguishes it is that the patterns are worked separately with

the most microscopic minuteness, and are afterwards sewed on. The flax employed in the manufacture grows near Hall; the best comes from a place called Rebecque. The finest sort costs from 300 to 400 frames per lb, and it is worth its weight in gold; everything depends on the tenuity of the fibre. It is said that the persons who spin the thread for Brussels lace, and also for the French cambric (batiste) of St. Quentin, are obliged to work in confined dark rooms, into which light is admitted only partially by a small aperture; and that by being thus compelled to pay more constant and minute attention to their work they discipline the eye and attain the faculty of spinning the flax of that web-like fineness which constitutes the excellence of these

two fabrics. THE PRINCE BISHOPS OF LIEGE.-Liége is the capital of the Walloons, who spread from this to Longwy in France and to Mons, and are very anxious not to be supposed Flemish, claiming a descent from the Eburones. The Walloon language is a dialect or rather idiom of the French, but it contains both Celtic and Teutonic words unknown to French of any age. Walloons, like the Swiss, served in former times in the armies of Spain, Austria and France; they were generally enrolled in cavalry regi-ments. A regiment of seven hundred men composed the standing army or body guard of Prince Bishops, of Liége. The German emperors, as early as the tenth century, raised the Bishops of Liége to the rank sovereign and independent princes, and bestowed territory upon them, which they held as a fief of the empire. At the time of the visit of Pope Innocent the Second with St. Bernard in 1131 the chapter of St. Lambert was the noblest known: of its sixty canons nine were the sons of kings, fourteen sons of dukes, twentynine counts, and seven barons. The government of the bishops was never strong, and the history of Liége is little better than a narrative of a succession of bloody revolutions, in which a discontented populace struggled for power and licence with a despotic and often incompetent ruler. Liège, nevertheless, remained under the dominion of its bishops down to the time of the dominion of its bisnops down to the time of the French revolutionary invasion in 1794. It is recorded that one of them had the audacity to declare war against Louis XIV., for which temerity he was chastised by having the city bombarded about his ears for five days in 1691 by Marshal Boufflers. A visit to Liége and the ancient Bishops' Palace will call to the mind of a Englishmen the visid someward description. an Englishman the vivid scenes and descriptions of Sir Walter Scott's beautiful tale "Quentin Durward." The citizens of Liége, puffed up by pride and by their wealth, gave constant proofs of their boldness and independence by acts of insubordination and even of open rebellion. In 1468, at the instigation of secret emissaries of Louis XI., they broke out into open revolt, seized upon the person of their bishop in his castle of Tongres, and brought him prisoner to Liége. They were headed by one John de Vilde, or Ville, called by the French Le Sauvage; it is not improbable that he was an Englishman, whose real name was Wild (and—who knows? quite possibly an ancestor of a very similar the notorious Jonathan), and that he was one of those lawless soldiers who at that time served wherever they got the best pay, changing sides just as it suited them. They were free lances. The Liégeois under this Vilde committed many acts of horrible cruelty, cutting in pieces before the bishop's eyes one of his attendants, and murdering sixteen others, who were canons of the church, on the road to Liege. In Sir W. Scott's romance William de la Marck plays nearly the same part as Wild, but in reality this bishop succeeded soon after in making his escape. In 1248, fourteen years after the events narrated in the novel, William de la Marck, called "The Wild Boar of Ardennes," wishing to obtain the mitre for his son, murdered the Bishop of Liége, Louis de Bourbon, whom Charles the Bold had supported. Liége was nearly burnt to the ground, in revenge or punishment, by Charles in 1468. Many of the inhabitants were slaughtered at once, a great number fled to the woods, only to perish there of cold.

STEANGE FEAT.—A newspaper of January 8, 1821, mentions an extraordinary feat by Mr. Huddy, the postmaster of Lismore, in the 97th year of his age. He travelled for a wager, from that town to Fermoy in a Dungarvon oyster tub, drawn by a pig, a badger, two cats, a goose, and a hedgehog; with a large red nightcap on his head, a pigdriver's whip in one hand, and in the other a common cow's horn, which he blew to encourage his team, and to give notice of this

new mode of posting. SLUGS.—Mr. Arthur Aikin, in his Calendar of Nature, presents us with a variety of acceptable information concerning the operations of Nature throughout the year. During the mild weather of winter, slugs are in constant motion preying on plants and green wheat. Their coverings of slime prevent the escape of animal heat, and hence they are enabled to ravage when their brethren of the shell, who are m cold, lie dormant. Earthworms likewise appear about this time, but let the man of nice order, with a little garden, discriminate between the destroyer and the innocent and useful inhabi-One summer evening the worms from beneath a small grass plot lay half out of their holes, or were dragging their slow length upon the surface. They were all carefully taken up and preserved as a breakfast for the ducks. In the following year the grass plat, which had flourished annually with its worms, vegetated unwillingly. They were the under gardeners that loosened the sub-soil, and let the warm air through the entrances to nourish the roots of the herbage. "Their calm desires that asked but little room " were unheeded, and their useful--even that of the worms-was unknown until their absence was felt.

A QUESTION.-When Dr. Beadon was rector of Eltham, in Kent, the text he one day took to preach from was, "Who art thou?" After reading it he made a pause for the congregation to reflect on the words; when a gentleman in a military dress who at the instant was proceeding up the middle aisle of the church, supposing it to be a question addressed to him, replied: sir, am an officer of the sixteenth regiment of foot, on a recruiting party here; and I have come to church because I wish to be acquainted with the neighbouring clergy and gentry." This so disconcerted the divine and astonished the congregation that the sermon went on with considerably difficulty.

MY FRIENDS AND I. A STUDENT'S STORY.

I am not afraid to tell you this story, simply because I never met you. I would no more tell it to the man I dined with to-day or with whom shall dine to-morrow; to the lady with whom I had that long conversation on psychology last week; to my cousin the lawyer, or that other cousin the clergyman, or to my Bohemian friend the journalist, than I would tell them if I had been so misguided as to pick somebody's pocket. I would not even tell it to my wife. But I sit

here alone at midnight, and I write to you who will never know me if you see me, for I shall give myself a name that is not mine for the occasion; and I feel that my mind will be easier when I have confided it to your ears without having run the risk of being suspected of one of two things, mendacity or insanity.

I am-again what a comfort to have on my invisible cap !—I am eight-and-thirty years old. When a man has so many years as this he is likely to have little histories in his life, little tragedies all played out, from the sweet prelude of music and lovers' whispered vows to the dropping of the curtain on dead hopes, and open graves, and broken hearts. There are some in my life.

Isidora does not know it. Isidora is my wife and is just twenty. She thinks me a bachelor who never loved before I met her at a ball. Well, I am willing to begin my life over again at that point with her. We have been married

two years and our first buby is cutting its first two years and our list bloy is cutting its rist tooth, which is why I am here alone in the dining-room with the student's lamp, my ink-stand and paper, and an empty little rocking-chair with a work-basket in it. Yes, but for baby's first tooth perhaps I might never have told this story at all.

I fell in love with Nona Moss while I was still at college. She was the daughter of Professor Moss, who supervised the higher branches of mathematics, but Nona was not a learned person. She could paint flowers, play popular airs on the piano and dance.

She was a daisy of a gifl who wore white muslin by preference and liked to have natural flowers in her belt and in her hair.

I had introductions to the family—letters setting me forth as an excellent young man of ability, I believe—and the professor was very kind to me.

I became intimate at the delightful little house, with its polished floors and Persian rugs,

shelves of old china, and women, such as one saw nowhere else.

Mrs. Moss, a kind, elderly lady, who was perpetually gardening either out of doors or at the window-boxes, smiled upon me and Nona.

Dear little Nona! I think for a while she liked me very much. Like Byron's

thought she liked me very much. Like Byron's heroine, "She was not false, but she was fickle."

We had walked hand in hand together. I had even kissed her at parting. She had given me a lock of her hair, and wore a blue forget-me-not ring that I had had made for her when one evening I took Frank Fearing with me to

Frank was a fine, tall fellow with broad shoulders and perfect coats, with kinky black hair, and a big chin with a dimple in it, with a loud voice, a talent for music and a way with women.

I never thought much of my own personal appearance and I have no doubt other people thought less. And not to make the story too long I will simply state in four words all that occurred-Frank cut me out.

Even now with that baby upstairs cutting his tooth I cannot laugh about it. Yet it is scarcely I, that slender young fellow who was so miserable. I see myself now a voluntary exile from the house where I had passed so many happy evenings pacing up and down the road in the darkness watching Frank's shadow, which the lamplight cast upon the white shades of the sitting-room windows.

I remember myself standing on the bridge in the moonlight looking down into the rather shallow river which ran through the town, and seriously contemplating suicide almost as though I were somebody else. But I am glad to remember that I had courage enough not only to behave myself in the presence of others as though nothing had happened but to preserve my friendship with Frank and Nona.

Nona knew that I had liked her. Frank believed that every man envied him his prize; but none of us ever spoke of the subject, and I was best man at the wedding.

They were engaged a year and by that time my feelings for Nona were only those of rather romantic friendship.

Is this the story I am afraid to tell people, and that I only tell you because you do not know me? you ask. No, the story is yet to come, although this preface seems necessary.

The New Year's Eve after Frank's wedding I spent at his house. There were other guests there, but I stayed later than the rest to see the new year in with them.

It was a warm evening for the time of year, and the fire was in the old fashion, newly-revived by methetic people—a wood fire on arristic andirons under a carved oak mantel set about with China painted tiles.

A small table was in the middle of the room, and on this stood a decanter, some glasses and a dish of fruit. We sat about it.

As the clock struck twelve-as the old year departed—as the new year was born—we lifted our glasses to our lips and drank to each other hand in hand.

J I can Hers rings u his, fir almond Ther bright fell tog We house.

the old us. Tr must m New Y "A & away a they sh this tir That

foreign

They

sages f ceived . "Nona she wo that th old out That who ha and of steame

overdu

and No

voyage

I cou

me, for that th all the But growin could r all reg from scarcel nor wh And

Thei closed lightswhere myself night. they w old yes to go they co

anxiou

I ha left, fo the do library my roo garden frozen the sno

A sp the hor went o match The were li dragon

about In e of the ful har upon t

I too andiro I can see their hands still.

Hers a soft, round, white hand, with bright rings upon it, and only dimples at the joints; his, firm, and smooth, and brown, with long, almond-shaped nails-both handsome hands.

There was silence after this for a while. The bright brands on the andirons broke in two and

fell together with a soft little crash.

We heard the rising wind sigh without the house, and the fancy came into my mind that the old year was grieving to turn his back upon Then Nona spoke:

"Frank, whatever happens between, we three must meet again, just as we meet now, every

New Year's Eve."
"A good idea," he said. "Put those glasses away and we will drink from them next year; they shall be sacred to our New Year's Eves from this time onward. Eh, Alfred ?"

"If you will let me come," I answered. in a little while we shook hands and parted.

That year Frank and Nona were to make a foreign tour.

They sailed in May.

Frank wrote to me often, and gave me messages from Nona. In the last letter I ever received he spoke of our New Year's Ever

We must not forget that, Alf," he said. "Nona declares that if she could not get home she would certainly 'project her spirit'—is not that the right expression?—into our little diningroom to meet you as the new year followed the old out of the world.'

That was a stormy autumn and winter. Those who had friends upon the ocean were anxious and oppressed by fears. Vessels were lost, and oppressed by fears. Vessels were lost, steamers that came to port at last were long

I could only hope when I thought of Frank and Nona that they had not started upon their That I had no letters did not alarm me, for he had said to all their correspondents that they should not write again but would keep all the rest of their adventures for talk when we

But as the months were on and I saw the growing anxiety of those to whom they were nearer if not dearer than they were to me, I could not quite comfort myself by the words we all repeated to each other about their going from place to place, having so much to see, scarcely knowing where to have letters directed,

nor when they would return.

And on New Year's Eve I was very sad and

Their little house stood with its shutters losed upon its frozen garden, no fire within, no

lights—all dark and cold and gloomy.

My fancy pictured to me the tiny dining-room
where we three sat together while I had pledged myself to meet them at twelve o'clock that

Wherever they were it seemed to me that they would think of that room and of me as the old year died, and the fancy came into my mind to go there-to keep the rendezvous, though they could not.

I had been into the house often since they left, for Frank had given me the key of one of the doors that I might have the use of his library, and as the clock struck eleven I left my room and crunching over the crisp, frozen snow, made my way to the gate of the garden, opened it, though I had a tussle with a frozen snowdrift to go through with, brushed the snow away from the library door and opened

A spell of emptiness and desolation was upon the house. It chilled me and I shivered, but I went on into the dining-room and there struck a match which I carried in my pocket.

The Christmas candles, the red candles that were lit on that New Year's Eve, were still in the dragon candlesticks. I lit them and looked

In expectation of the arrival of the dwellers of the house at any hour that winter, some careful hand had filled the wood-basket which stood upon the hearth.

I took some logs from it, piled them on the andirons and lit a fire. The red light caught

the gilding on the paper, kissed the folds of the crimson portières and showed me the face of Nona looking from its frame. My friends seemed very near to me.

"Are they coming to-night?" I asked myself; "has some presentiment sent me here to wait for them? It would be like Frank," I said to myself, "to surprise me by being just in time to drink that second glass to the New Year with

I laughed to myself.

"I will be beforehand with him," I thought, and I went to the sideboard, found there the decanter of burgundy and the three treasured glasses; set them upon the table, and, placing my chair where it had stood at that hour a year before, waited and listened.

Did I hear a carriage rolling up the road? Bah! How could I? The road was covered with snow. Yes, there were sounds of wheels. They came nearer and nearer, and passed. Three times I listened to them, arose to open the door, and went back to my chair with a sigh. The hands of my watch pointed to a quarter to mid-

night.
Yet they might come still. A train was due in five minutes. I heard the shrick of the steam whistle-another and another. The train was at

the turn.

When there were no passengers to set down or take up this train did not stop. I knew the sig-nal which indicated that this was so. In a me-ment more I heard it. They had not come. They could not come now, and yet how close to

me they seemed.
"On, dear friends," I said to myself, "at least I remember you: and you, do you think of

me ?

The hands of the watch I had laid beside me pointed together to twelve. I filled the three glasses.

"A happy New Year, dear ones, wherever you are," I said, and lifted mine.

And at that moment I saw, as plainly as I see the letters I am now inscribing, two hands, which lifted the two glasses I had placed on the opposite side of the table. One was a fair, round, dimpled, woman's hand, on which dia-monds shone. The other a dark man's hand, with almond-shaped nails.

The hand of None—the hand of Frank; I knew them well. I saw nothing else—neither arm nor face; I heard no sound. In silence the three hands, those ghostly ones and mine, lifted the glasses and set them down empty, and I fell forward on the table in a swoon.

In the grey of the morning I came to myself, drept out of the house, and made my way to my own room; and I knew as well then as I know now that I must never tell the story of what I

But I also knew then, as well as I know now that the ship in which my friends had sailed from England had gone down into the weltering winter sea, bearing them with her.

ANSWERS TO SPHINX

IN OUR

CHRISTMAS NUMBER.

T.

Clear, lear, ear, are, lace, ace, real, ale.

Campbell, Tennyson, thus:

1. C roche T. 2. A d z E. 3. Mitte N. 4. ProvisioN. 5. Barbar Y. 6. EgeuS. 7. L 0.

TIT.

Scott, thus: 1. Shelly, Percy Bysshe ("To a Skylark.")

2. Coleridge, J. T. ("Love.")
3. Otway, Thomas ("Venice Preserved.")
4. Tennyson, Alfred ("Lady Clara Vere de 5. Thomson, James ("The Seasons.")

Deal, Lead, thus:

1. Dul L 2 ElbE. 3. AbbA. 4. LoaD.

V.

Castile, thus:

C FAB GUSTY CASTILE BRIEF OLD

Coal, thus:

1. CaputchouC. 2, 0 h i 0. 3. ArmadA. 4. Lione L.

VI

VII

Shire, hire, ire, re, e.

VIII.

TATTLER H PP A LOVE CHASE N S 10 I 16 H

TX.

Slapdash.

X.

O CAB CABIN BIN

XI.

NURSE POINT BRAIN ECLAT TEPOR

XII.

SPRAW PRAY RA Y AY

XIII.

BED COMET BODEFUL EMELINE DEFICIT TUNIC LET

AUSTERE ULLAGE SLANG TANG EGG RE



[A DISCOVERY.]

THE MYSTERIOUS CLERK: A PHYSICIAN'S STORY.

CHAPTER I.

Most stories end with a marriage-mine begins with one.

The marriage was my own, it was also Annie Burdon's.

I think we both liked our wedding-day the better for knowing that all our friends and relations on both sides thought us a couple of lunatics.

As far as we could discover our lunacy lay in my having no money and no prospects, and in her having no prospects and no money. I had come to Bath to see if the place was

unhealthy enough to contain another physician. I found it nothing of the kind, but admirably suited to find a wife in.

The long and the short of it is, we left there for London, as rich as two young people can be who have not means to live together for more than the space of the honeymoon.

I ought to say that I had been too hard a medical student to make many friends. But my first and foremost duty now was to justify Annie's belief in me by getting on instead of merely drifting along.

I set to work and conquered my naturally re-

I had not been married I should not have tried.

But, on the other hand, the fact that made me try to win seemed to make me fail in winning. We took lodgings in a poor neighbourhood where many patients might mean a few fees; we economised more and more, and I occasion-ally earned a guinea or two from the medical journals.

But we could not afford to wait, and meanwhile things kept getting worse instead of better.

But love did not even look toward the window. though poverty was knocking furiously at the

At last, when things had reached their worst, I was offered the post of a surgeon on a ship bound for Jamaica.

So I made arrangements with my employers to pay my wages to my wife during my sailings, sent her down to her father's, and went on my first voyage.

The Darien, which was my ship, had many passengers, but none of them gave me much much trouble save one.

But then he made up for everybody. His name was Jules Londas, a singular name for an Englishman, but I was told he represented an old West Indian commercial house, founded during the Spanish times.

Mr. Londas was a small, dried-up man, be-I set to work and conquered my naturally re-tiring disposition by trying very hard indeed. If and a pair of sharp black eyes. His whole face leaving me to-morrow morning without seeing

was pinched and keen, his expression harassed and eager, and yet not without dignity.

People who knew something of him at home

said he was a miser. I had not been twenty-four hours at sea before I found out his ruling passion, or rather his ruling terror.

It was a morbid dread of death, which almost amounted to monomania. From the moment he discovered I was the surgeon I had no peace with him. I had to treat Mr. Londas for heart, stomach, brain-every organ he had about him.

The day before we were due at Kingston he said:

"Mr. Wilson, I must make a bargain with you. I have the greatest objection to every medical man in Jamaica. If I had not there is no one who could give me his whole time. fact is-it is nothing to me whether you believe it or not-I am in the most imminent peril of dying by some bodily disease before the end of my fifty-seventh year. I shall be fifty-seven on the 10th of September, and if I once pass that date I may safely look forward to nearly forty years of increasing health and happiness. Of course you think I am talking nonsense, but that is not the question. You are a stranger to Jamaica; you are young; you are free from other engagements; you have your whole time; you want money; and I must trust your skill and honour. Stay with me at my place till midnight on the 10th of September. It will be worth your while."

It was only too true that I wanted money. I did not like my patient, but it was a good chance, and I became private and confidential physician to Mr. Jules Londas.

His business was carried on in Kingston, but he took me with him to his sugar plantation, near Trelawney, in the western part of the

Mr. Londas had few neighbours, and saw none of them. His household consisted of only some black servants ruled by an old mulatto woman who acted as cook, nurse and housekeeper, and I had to draw up dishes as if they were prescriptions.

It was in vain that I tried the effects of regular living and all kinds of exercise in the open air. He followed my directions with careful punctuality, and though the man grew to be as well as one who keeps a liver can ever expect to be, nothing would disabuse him of his ruling

"Why should he dread death so much?" I often thought, "he has no one else to live

He certainly held a position on the island, and it was hard to say whether the higher families held aloof from him or he from them. At the end of the first month he paid me fifty guineasthe amount agreed upon-which I immediately sent off to Annie.

At last, thank Heaven, the 10th of September

Never shall I forget the state of Jules Londas on the fatal day. He spent the whole time until six in the evening in an arm-chair, with his finger on his pulse

I then compelled him to take some food, but he trembled at every morsel.

At seven he grew feverish; at nine I was seriously alarmed, and gave him an opiate, hoping he might sleep till past the fatal hour. But it did not act on his excited brain. And so the remaining three hours dragged by, and at last we heard the first stroke of twelve.

He rose from his chair and leaned on me, counting them as they fell slowly, "ten—eleven—twelve."

I should not have been surprised had he dropped dead at the last stroke. On the con-trary, he drew a deep sigh of relief and turned

trary, he drew a deep sign of renet and cannot to me triumphantly.

"Thank you, Wilson," said he, taking my hand, "you have given me a forty-years' lease of life, and I thank you. I am now fifty-seven years old. I have the best part of life before me. I don't want you to think me inhospitable or ungrateful, but I should be obliged by your

me a doctor fifty g to hea circun used 1 was s allowe We last I

Mes chequ last m work,

> IL afterv

> gnost

specia

to ret

Almos law, I dead In Nee atone But fe It w impos terrib I had tice I Ig get a

and h

mana

the fe

little ployn Bu desk poste "B her. came. it out

I o

ec M it stra furth receit about cause sides of m learn this : kind

Th one t dream befor no re myse Th spent Ih

with " ed

ne

200

rt.

he

th

of

of

88

ıt

to

d

d

t

me again. Thanks to you, I have done with doctors now. Here is your second cheque for fifty guineas. By noon to-morrow I shall expect to hear you are gone."

I certainly thought my dismissal, under the circumstances, was odd and abrupt, but I was used to the eccentricities of Mr. Londas, and was so tired of them that I was glad to be allowed to run away.

We shook hands and parted, and that was the

last I ever saw of Mr. Jules Londas.

Matters had been so arranged—I fancy by the special intervention of Mr. Londas—that I was to return by the Darien in a week or two.

Meanwhile I sent the bulk of the second cheque to Annie, keeping only a few pounds to

last me till the day of sailing.

But before that day came the low-lying sugar lands in which I had been living had done their work, and I was prostrated with yellow fever.

CHAPTER II.

I LOOKED like a ghost when one day long afterwards I reached Bath. Had I been a real ghost nobody could less have expected me. Almost the first one I met was my brother-in-Tom Burdon, who told me his father was dead and the family scattered, but that Annie was with him.

In a few minutes I was with her. Need I describe such a meeting?

We were happy enough that day to almost atone for the long months of our separation. But for the future days.

It was desperate to think of them, well nigh impossible to think of them. My health had terribly given way. By going with Mr. Londas I had thrown away the only opening into practice I had ever found.

I gave up my professional hopes and tried to get a situation of some sort, but it did not come,

and hope of it grew steadily less. I need not recount the way in which we managed to get through those bitter weeksthe few pounds I made with my pen, the sale of little personal treasures, chance scraps of employment I found in town, and so on, and so on.

But one day, when I was at Annie's writing desk looking for a pen my eye fell on an un-opened letter directed to me. It had been posted in Spanish Town, Jamaica, as far back as the 12th of September. "Bless me!" said Annie, as I held it up to

her. "I put that letter away for you when it came, then everything that happened since put it out of my head."

I opened it and found a letter and a cheque. The letter was as follows:

September 12, 183-"MY DEAR WILSON,-You must have thought it strange that I did not recognise your success further than by the fee which you would have received had you failed. I said nothing at the time because I felt sure you would make a fuss about receiving more than your due, and because I wanted all the thanks to be spoken by me in that supreme moment of my life. Besides I did not wish to enable you-for reasons of my own-to remain in Jamaica. Having learned from you Mrs. Wilson's address I send this to await your arrival at home. Pray be kind enough to accept it by way of thanks
"From yours, very faithfully,
"JULES LONDAS."

The cheque was on the Bank of England for one thousand pounds. A first I thought I was dreaming. But it was real enough. There it lay before Annie's eyes and mine. Of course I had no real scruple about accepting it and relieved myself by writing a letter of thanks to my late patient.

The next morning I started for London. I spent almost my last shilling to pay my fare.

I happened to have with me a fellow-traveller, a hale and hearty old gentleman named Dunbar, with whom I had become slightly acquainted.

"Going all the way to town?" he asked, in his strong, vigorous voice.

"Yes-on business," I said, a little proud of so new a word.

"So am I, worse luck. I am going to give our member a bit of the town's mind about the n-pump. Which way shall you be going?"
I am going to the Bank of England." town-pump.

"What, to my old shop? I haven't been in Threadneedle Street these forty years. But I believe I should go straight to my old desk, as straight as if it had been yesterday. Yes, I was a paying clerk there in the old times. If you go through the door in the left hand corner of the court you will see where I used to stand. And, by George, it's a fact that some desks are lucky and some unlucky, some go right and some go wrong."

"What a curious theory, Mr. Dunbar!"
"It isn't a theory at all—it's a fact, sir. Now the desk next to me was one of the downright unlucky ones; bad in every way. I knew both the clerks there in my time, and in fact rather more of them than any one else. The desk on the other side was a lucky one. Men went up high in the bank from it as if it were a step in the ladder. Mine was betwixt and between, both in place and luck, and all the better for me. But about that unlucky desk;" and he settled himself for the inevitable anecdote of his younger days to which he was given. I first stood at the bank counter, my left-hand neighbour—on the unlucky side—was a young fellow named Frederick Hawes. Fred we used to call him. We all liked him, and two or three of us, who got to know him best, liked his sister too—Nancy Hawes. She and her brother lived with an old aunt in Finsbury. I believe six of us asked her to marry us, six times apiece—I did I know. But she laughed at us all round, and made us better friends with her than ever. "Brother Fred must marry first," she used to

And we knew she meant it.

"But there was one of our set who wouldn't take no, like the rest of us. Isaac Ayscough was his name.

"He was older and closer than the rest, and the only one who never talked about Miss Nancy, and somehow he was the only one with whom she never seemed to be easy or friendly. He was not only older but he was cleverer and better at business and pleasure.

" After a time Nancy grew less cheerful and Fred less sociable, and at the same time more intimate with Ayscough, until we others hardly saw anything of him.

"I once spoke to Nancy about it, but she only cried, and said 'I hate Isaac Ayscough!"

"I saw she knew Ayscough was leading poor Fred wrong, though no one could tell him. And I know now that Ayscough was working in some villainous, underhand way to get Fred into trouble so that he might get Nancy into his

"Well, sir, one day it came out-it was the year 1799-how a signature had been forged by Fred Hawes to a transfer warrant. Isaac Ayscough discovered the forgery, and Fred Hawes was hanged."

" Hanged !"

"Why not? That was the law then."
"And the girl?"

"Ah, poor Nancy! that is the worst part of it all. That day, after the hanging, when Ayscough was just leaving his desk—for Finsbury, no doubt—in walked Nancy dressed in white as if for a wedding, and went straight to Ayscough, and asked him, sweetly, 'I smy brother Frederick here to-day?' Ayscough didn't answer her. But though I was ready to break down at first sight, I saw how things were, and said, just as quietly as if nothing had happened, 'No, miss, not to-day.'

"And so it went on, day after day, week

after week, year after year.

"Every day at noon she would cross the rotunda to Ayscough's desk at the paying counter, and ask, 'Is my brother, Mr. Frederick, here to-day? and one of the clerks always used to answer, 'No, miss, not to-day.' And then she always said, 'Give my love to him when he

returns, and say I will call to-morrow.'
"Poor thing! She was homeless, and some of us helped her aunt to keep her. But one 'to- lying before me.

morrow' she did not come, and then she was buried. If Ayscough wanted her he had gone too far.

"And Ayscough, what of him?"

"I never spoke to him after, and he never spoke to me. By a queer chance he had been at the lucky desk before. After Fred's death he was shifted to the unlucky one where Fred had been. The years went by. He didn't rise. At fifty he had become a strange, solitary, friendless old man. He was punctual in all his duties, and turned into a sort of machine. At ten he came to his desk, at the closing hour he went out of sight, and nobody knew what became of him till ten o'clock the next day. At last he died without warning in a little lodging at Hackney. But here is our journey's end. Good Hackney. But here is our journey's end. Good day, Mr. Wilson, and I thank you for your company."

CHAPTER III.

THE wholesome bustle of the street soon drove this rather ghastly reminiscence of old Mr. Dunbar's youth from my mind. I reached the bank, and, entering, found myself in a large office, with desks arranged alphabetically, facing a courtyard filled with trees and shrubs, in the centre of which a fountain played lazily.

I took a pen and wrote on the back of the cheque "Andrew Wilson." Then I stood for a moment or two hesitating as to which of the

desks should honour my cheque.

Presently, by some chance, my eyes met those of a clerk standing behind the counter, who seemed to notice my hesitation, and beckoned me to him. There were two clerks at his

One in the middle was engaged in making entries, and did not seem to notice me. The clerk whose attention I had caught was standing a little behind the other's left shoulder, but still close to the counter.

He was a shrivelled, withered old man, who, in appearance, though probably not in years, might have been the father of Mr. Dunbar. And yet I don't know that I should have observed him at all had it not been for the very obtrusive singularity of his costume.

He wore a snuff-coloured coat of Quaker cut with huge flapped pockets in the skirts and a flower-pattern silk waistcoat. The lower part of his body was hidden by the counter; and his neck was swathed in at least a dozen folds of snow-white cambric, starched and frilled.

But the eyes soon shifted from the clothes to the face of the man who wore them. It was the most hideous and ghastly I had ever seen

in any human being.

Hideous and ghastly as it was the features were not ill formed. It is not improbable that they were once handsome. The contour of cheeks and chin was oval, the nose straight, the eyes of a rich hazel, the brow square and full. The skin of the face had aged into the semblance of badly-stretched leather, through which the bones seemed bursting, the colour was a corpse-like grey. The cheeks had grown so hollow as to have become lost in the jaws. A thin circle of hair just prevented the wrinkled scalp from being wholly bald. The dark eyes had sunk into cup-like cavities, the nasal cartilage was a livid blue.

The clothes hung loosely as if they had been made for a much taller and stouter man. To judge of them by the head they might have covered a corpse.

The oblong brooch which fastened the voluminous neckcloth was of gold with the letters "A. H." in small seed pearls upon it.

I put my cheque into his outstretched hand. "How will you take it?" he asked, in a vague, hoarse voice, without any strength or tone, short or long?'

His voice seemed as if heard in a dream. I passed my hand over my eyes to make sure it was not while I answered:

"I will take it in one note, if you please."

I heard a slight, crisp rustle. I opened my eyes dreamily, they fell on a crisp bank note

I looked up from it to the cashier, but he had left his desk and was gone.

I took the next coach for Bath, which I had left with scarcely more than my fare, and returned a rich man.

CHAPTER IV.

My castles proved remakably well built. By a piece of good fortune I was able to step into vacant practice.

My health came back at a magical pace and everything seemed destined to go on well, thanks to my West Indian patient, to whom I wrote once more but from whom I never heard again.

In speaking of my friend Mr. Dunbar I ought to have said he had two sons in town, both middle-aged men, one a lawyer, the other was manager of the bank where I had opened my

The lawyer was Mr. Robert, the bank manager was Mr. William, and both were good friends of mine.

One afternoon when I happened to be at the bank Mr. William asked to see me in his private room. I found another visitor in it who was a stranger to me.

"Wilson," said he, "you remember when opening your account with us last May you paid in a single Bank of England note. Should you know it if you saw it again?"

" I endorsed it with my name."

- "Your name, in your own handwriting?"
 "Certainly."
- "Is this it?"
 "It is," I said.

"How long ago, and from whom did you receive this note

"On the 10th of May at the Bank of England."

The two gentlemen looked at one another. "You say," said the stranger, "that you on the 10th of May last received over the counter of the Bank of England this note of this particular date and number. Would you swear it in a court of justice if necessary P"
"I certainly would swear to that anywhere.

"On what account was this note paid into your hands?"

"In payment of a cheque drawn in my favour by Mr. Jules Londas, of Kingston, Jamaica."

"Can you give me the date of the cheque?"
"The 12th of September last."

"You are sure of that?"

"'Absolutely sure."

"Then I need detain you or Mr. Dunbar no

"What does it all mean ?" I asked Mr. Dunbar, as soon as the other had gone. "I hope you are not in trouble about that note. I don't know much about banking."

"I hope," he said, "that no one will be in any trouble, but I have told all that I know about the matter, and so have you. I daresay we shall not hear of it again. Will you excuse we shall not hear of it again. Will you excuse
me? I am very busy just now."
The following afternoon I was in the cell of a
London police to the control of the control of

Within a week I had London police-station. given bail to meet my trial on an indictment for having forged and uttered a note of the Bank

of England for one thousand pounds.

Mr. Robert Dunbar acted as my legal adviser. He was a shrewd, careful lawyer, but the case puzzled him as much as it baffled me. Whether he believed me guilty I know not, but if he did not he was more credulous than I should have

The case was this: It has always been the practice of the Bank of England never to reissue a note, but to burn every one that returns to it. Now, on a certain day, a note for one thousand pounds, bearing a certain number and other marks of identification, had, in the usual course of business, been returned to the bank

Of that there could be no question unless there had been a conspiracy among many officials to save it from the fire. Some time after I paid into my hank a note corresponding in every of the control of

recorded particular with the note that had been destroyed

The case looked almost fatal for me. I had not been content with declaring that I had re-ceived what had proved to be a reissued note from the Bank of England, but asserted I had received it in payment of a cheque drawn on the 12th of September.

And, to sum up all, the bank had been long ago notified that its customer, Mr. Jules Londas, of Kingston, had been accidentally drowned in Kingston harbour on September 11th, the very day after I had left him to the enjoyment of a new lease of life for forty years. And his cheque-book had been lost with him, and no evidence remained of his having drawn any such cheque save his letter to me-if it had not been written

by me.

So much for Mr. Jules Londas, his hopes
and his fears! The man who had nothing to
dread save a death by disease on or before a
certain Saturday had perished by drowning the

Perhaps he had mistaken his fifty-seventh birthday; perhaps not. Who can tell? At any rate there must have been some mistake.

But it was a terrible one for me. Nothing but the nature of Mr. Robert Dunbar's defence for me-that no official or expert could detect the slightest sign of forgery on the face of the note—warranted my admission to bail on so serious a charge as forgery upon the Bank of

But to make the matter more complicated and dangerous for me a note of the same amount had been given on the 10th of May in payment of a cheque drawn by Mr. Jules Londas peared on the books, but it was of a different number, and had not yet been returned.

About a week after my arrest a communica-tion from Mr. Robert Dunbar informed me that the bank would give me all facilities for identifying the clerk who had, according to my story, cashed my cheque, if I thought fit to avail myself of them.

Which I did; and, in company with my solicitor and old Mr. Dunbar, I once more travelled to London, and then left them in one of the private offices of the bank while I walked the length of the counter.

All was just as it had been before. I saw twelve clerks at twelve desks, but the thirteenth, for whom I was looking, I did not see. He certainly was not at the counter, nor was he to be seen in the room, although my eyes went all over it from desk to desk in search of him. "Well?" asked Mr. Allen, the director, when

I returned.

" I can only say that I have not seen him," I answered, while I felt my heart sink within

"Then," he said, "we have done all we met for; there is nothing more to be said, as far as I can see. Mr. Dunbar," turning to my solicitor," you are satisfied that we have given Mr. Wilson every opportunity. He says he received it from a clerk who never even existed. Have you anything to say?"

Mr. Robert Dunbar shrugged his shoulders a

little diplomatically.
"Only that Mr. Wilson has failed to remember one bank clerk from another—nothing more. Many people remember faces badly—we don't rest our defence on my client's memory, you

"But I do!" I could not help exclaiming, heedless of the look of angry warning my law-yer threw me. "My remembrance of the whole matter is perfectly clear!"

"Perhaps Mr. Wilson can describe him?"

said Mr. Allen.
"Certainly not!" Mr. Dunbar said. "Whatever he has to say his counsel will say for him at the right time and place."
"I can describe him," I said; "and since this is not a court I have a right to speak—and I

He-that clerk-

the note may be forged, but not the man. He was short, bent and shrivelled, quite bald, fearfully pale, and seemed almost fleshless; he had an ashy, sallow complexion and dark, deep-set eyes. He were a snuff-coloured coat with large pockets and a waistcoat of flowered silk, and many yards of frilled cambric around his neck, which was fastened by a curious old brooch with a setting of seed peals, containing a look of reddish brown hair fastened by a lover's knot in pearls between the letters A. and H.

"Good Heaven!" eried old Mr. Dunbar, hitherto ailent, with a power that made the windows rattle. "Good Heaven! He's seen old Ayscough! Haven't you ever heard, Mr. Allen—and you, Mr. Brown—that the ghost of Isaac Ayscough, who hanged Fred Hawes sixty Isaac Aysoough, who hanged Fred Hawes sixty years ago, is always at a clerk's elbow when he cashes the cheque of a dead man? I've seen that brooch as I've seen him every day for twenty years—and that's Hr! A. H.—it's the hair of Nancy Hawes, poor girl! The doctor has seen old Isaac Aysoough, who's paid with the ghost of a burnt bank note the cheque of a dead

I am nearing the end of my story. But first I must state one fact, which may possibly afford a different explanation of the mystery, though it never satisfied old Mr. Dunbar, and it never satisfied me.

The fact was this: When at ten o'clock on the morning after my failure to identify the clerk in the bank the chief cashier opened his letters he found in one of the envelopes, unaccompanied he found in one of the envelopes, unaccompanied by any letter or word or token to show whence or from whom it came, a Bank of England note for one thousand pounds. On comparing its number with the proper entries it was found to be the note which, according to those entries, had been given to me in payment of Mr. Jules Londas's cheque on the 10th of May. So when I surrendered to take my trial no

evidence was offered of my having forged a note, which no one could say with the least reason had been forged at all. I might have dreamed, I might have lied; but neither dreams nor lies are crimes, and I was discharged.

FACETIÆ.

THE ME PLUS ULSTER.

FAIR CUSTOMER: "But it makes one look so like a man!"

Show-woman: "That's just the beauty of it, SYMPATET:

PICTURE DEALER: "Ah, in early life I too

might have been an arkist."

Arrier: "Lor! Wh' a pity you weren't—tut-t-tt! 'Could have bought your own pictures, y'know."

Punch.

TAKING TIME BY THE PORELOCK.

GWENDOLINE: "Uncle George says every woman ought to have a profession, and I think

he's quite right."

Manna: "Indeed! And what profession do
you mean to choose?"

GWENDOLINE: "I mean to be a professional beauty.

THE LORD MAYOR'S RESIDENCE.-The Munching House. Punch.

UNCOMPROMISING.

THE DOCTOR'S DAUGHTER: "I declare you're a dreadful fanatic, Mrs. McCizzom. I do believe you think nobody will be saved but you and your minister."

OLD LADY: "Aweel, my dear, ah whiles hae ma doobts about the meenister!"

EVERY MAN IN HIS PLACE.

WHIC fishmon course, s

Ja

a stone. His I PAT: some pr His I the usu hams ev

America tressful of our o and half

PAT:

WHE oat sh (Boot-h WHE monger

> To By

E

N

It i The I at I tı

Th

I t Fre

CURI

quarrel

fond of

You Greenw going a you mu where MEM

> AUN I supr

Was so

JENE stamps champ of the s

WHICH are the poets most appreciated by Which are the poets most specifishmongers?—Why, Crabbe and Shelley, Fun. course, stoopid.

HARD TIMES IN OULD BRIN.

PAT: "Shure, yer honour, an' here's a foine sample o' taters I can let you have at throppence

His Honoun: "That's dirt cheap."

PAT: "An' my frind here can let yer have some prime Irish hams at fifty shillun a hundred-

His Honous: "Why, that's less than half the usual price; far cheaper than American

hams even

PAT: "Ah, they haven't enough relafe in America; we've been relafed so much this distressful year we've never touched bit nor scrap

HIS HONOUR: "Send round some potatoes and half a dozen hams, and the saints grant the distress may continue."

WITH A HOOK.

WHEN a lady takes her lover for a row in a boat she does not want any other bean took.

When the ponds will not bear in the parks, ice and skates can be procured at the fishmonger's.

PAPA'S ADVICE.

WHEN lannched upon The world, my son, Maintain your independence, lad; Forgetting naught Of precepts taught Beneath my superintendence, lad. If you are right, To all show fight, No need to fear their hating you; Those who at first Reviled you worst

Will end by imitating you. TO MY DARLING.

Fun.

To call it love would be absurd :-The centiment I feel By such a short and common word I never could reveal. To tell you how, and when, and where My passion grew and grew This pen and ink would hardly dare; But if you only knew!

It brings me joy and brings me grief, It haunts me day and night. The bottle yields me small relief, And spoils my appetite. I strive to hide my bitter cares Within my manly breast. I try to mind my own affairs; But if you only guess'd!

Though people say I'm growing gray, And also growing fat; I tell them in a kindly way I'm none the worse for that I wear the sickly mask of mirth, And smile as if exempt

From ev'ry mortal pang on earth; But if you only dreamt!

CURIOUS FAOT .- The Irishman most ready to quarrel with his bread-and-butter is always too fond of so-called patriotic toasts.

CAN'T STAND FIRE.

Young Housekeeper: "Well, but, Mr. Greenwood, how do you account for the table going all to pieces?"

SHOPKEFFER: "Hum! The fact is, madame, Jou must have had this table standing in a room where there was a fire." MEM. FOR ORNITHOLOGISTS.—Merrie England

was so called because it always had larks

THEIFT IN THE BOARD SCHOOLS.

AUNT OF THE FAMILY: "Well, Jenny dear, I suppose you are the best scholar in your

JENNY: "No, auntie, but I've saved most stamps. I'm last for general subjects, but I'm the champion stamp saver. I'm the Queen's head of the school." Moonshine.

A READY WEECK-ONER .- Rocks. Moonshine.

THE "(GREAT) EASTERN" QUESTION .- Will the meat succeed? Moonshine.

A RUMOUR is current to the effect that the next exhibition of the Royal Academy will witness the introduction of the Brush system of electric Moonshine.

TIT FOR TAT.

HUSBAND: "I'm so sorry to be so late. But I met half a dozen fellows, and they kept me out."

WIFE: "It doesn't matter very much, as it happens. A half dozen fellows dropped in and kept me up."

Brown doesn't see the attraction.

THE PICK OF THE PROFESSION .- Toothpicks. Moonshine.

SHIP'S PAINTERS .- Deck-orators.

Moonshine.

A LITTLE LOVE SONG.

Your arms for me, your heart for mine; I'll ask no other home through life. Your love for me, your name for mine; I'll yield all else to be your wife.

Your arms for me, your heart for mine, I wish no richer shrine in life. Your eyes on me, your care for mine, I ask no higher plane than-wife.

Your voice to me, your hand on mine, I care not for the praise of worlds. Your ears for me, your lips to mine, I care not for the gems of worlds.

With you to live, for you to toil, I ask no lighter task in life.

My life for yours I'd gladly spoil,

And count it blest, were I your wife.

Your arms for me, your path by mine, I ask no Paradise' sweet breath. Your faith undimmed, your love still mine, Is all the crown I ask at death.

Your arms for me, your heart for mine, I wish no other place in life. Your tears for me-e'en Death's sharp wine Would sweeter be, mourned as your wife.

Your life with me, your grave by mine, I ask no richer grant from time. Your mansion fair to reach round mine, And I shall know 'tis Heaven's clime.
A. W. P.

STATISTICS.

THE RE-VALUATION OF THE METEOPOLIS.-The results of the re-valuation of the metropolis, a work which has occupied the various districts during the year, have been reported to Mr. Jebb, the chief clerk of the Metropolitan Asylum Board, which is the authority under the Act (the Metropolis Valuation Act, 1869) to issue the Metropolis Valuation Act, 1869) to issue the return. This is the second quinquennial valuation. The metropolis shows a vastly increased value, owing, not only to the increase in the number of buildings, but to the rateable value of houses having been raised by the local authorities. When, in 1871, the list was first issued the gross value of the metropolis was £24,176,338, and the rateable value £19,900,072. In 1876, when the first quinquennial valuation In 1876, when the first quinquennial valuation was made, the gross value had risen to £28,096,021, and the rateable value to £23,154,639. The returns now given in show a gross value of £25,785,556, and a rateable value of £23,697,405. These totals, however, do not include the City of London, whose rating authorities have not yet sent in their returns, nor Poplar, nor the Middle Temple. The gross

value of the City of London is estimated at £3,953,707, and the rateable value at £3,313,522. The rateable value of Poplar is estimated at £311,895, on the gross of £423,706. The Middle Temple is estimated as likely to give in its returns £10,929 of rateable value on a gross of £13,144—a total increase of £500,000 on the three places. Hence the returns will be—gross value, £33,176,208, and a rateable value of £27,833,751—an increase in the second quinquennial period of £5,079,391 gross, and £4,679,112 rateable, and a total increase in the ten years of £8,999,865, and £7,933,679. The largest assessments of gross value next to the City are Kensington, £1,969,501; St. Paneras, £1,828,828; Islington, £1,757,589; Marylebone, £1,659,874; St. George's (Hanover Square) Union, £2,728,318; and Lambeth, £1,677,631.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

SPONGE CARE.—Twelve eggs, their weight in granulated sugar, and the same of flour. the yolks of the eggs and the sugar well together; beat the whites to a stiff froth; sift the flour very lightly; add a teaspoonful of the beaten white of egg and one of the flour alterna-tely till all is used; then add the grated rind and juice of a lemon. Put a well-greased paper in a tin baking pan, and bake the cake in it in a very hot oven; if it is getting too brown on top,

very not over; if it is getting too brown on top, cover with a piece of letter paper.

The Rolls.—Half a cake of compressed yeast in three half-pints of lukewarm water; add a quart of sifted flour, and mix well to a thick batter. Let it stand six or seven hours in a moderately warm place till well risen. Then add moderately warm place till well risen. Leen and two eggs, an ounce of butter, four ounces of sugar and a tablespoonful of salt; add flour (about a pint), and work well with the hands till it is a soft dough. Make into rolls; put them in the pans they are to be baked in, and set near the stove to rise; as soon as they rise bake in a quick oven.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Ir is estimated that the cost of protecting Captain Boycott will be about £10,000

The freedom of some 5,000 acres of Epping Forest has been effected by the Corporation of London, at a cost of £250,000.

The fashionable colour for women's bair is the shade called cheveux de la reine, cheveux venitiens, comète, or rayon de lune, as their blondness varies flax to red gold.

A New style of lighting is now being experi-mented upon at the Grand Opera, Paris, being with gas extracted from cork. The results are said to have been satisfactory.

THE Queen has sent to several of the hospitals in London parcels of linen for the benefit of the patients.

A VEGETABLE marrow was grown this year at Hawkhurst which weighed 66lb. It was grown upon a heap of stable manure and garden rubhish mixed.

THE Parliamentary vote to Sir Frederick Roberts will, it is stated, be the substantial sum of £25,000.

A BILL will be presented at the next Session of Parliament in the interest of a company which desires to introduce into the metropolis, and to other large towns, the system of public pneumatic clocks, now so widely used in Paris.

VERY curious experiment is about to be tried in the Houses of Parliament next session. Electrical instruments, that will not only telegraph but automatically print their messages, are being fitted up in four of the principal daily newspaper offices, and a verbatim report, quite apart from the reports taken by their own short-hand writers, is to be sent through by the Central News Agency at the rate of thirty words a

CONTENTS.

	Page	1	age
A SPRIG OF MISTLETOE VERA'S VENTUEE DONALD'S GHOST ZILLAR THE GIPSY; OR, LOVE'S CAPTIVE	924 924	HOUSEHOLD TREA- SURES MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE	279 239 240
THE DOCTOR'S FORS (COMPLETE) OUR COLUMNS FOR THE CURIOUS	209	-	No.
MY FRIENDS AND I ANSWERS TO SPHINE IN CHRISTMAS NUM-	234	ZILLAR THE GIPST; OR, LOVE'S CAPTIVE, commenced in	908
CLERE: A PHYSICIAN'S STORY	236	VERA'S VENTURE com-	915
POETRY STATISTICS	289	A Sprin of Mistleton	920

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS

OUR CORRESPONDENTS are informed that no charge is coade under any circumstances for advertisements appearing on this page.

pearing on this page.

E. T.—When putting away the silver tea or coffee-pot, which is not used every day, lay a little stick across the top under the cover, this will allow the fresh air to get in and will prevent mustiness; it will then be ready for use at any time, after having first been thoroughly rinsed with boiling water. Nothing is better to clean silver with than alcohol and ammonis; after rubbing with this, take a little whiting on a soft cloth and polish; even frosted silver, which is so difficult to clean, anny be easily made clear and bright in this way.

DOLY...-Eggs will keep for months, if they are simply placed in a box of salt, the small end downwards, and so placed that they do not touch each other. "Dolly" should be careful to select only those eggs which are quite fresh, for if the hon has sat upon them for a few hours only they will not keep. The salt should quite

cover them.

E. B.—To get rid of face pimples it is necessary to avoid very salt, rich, or greesy food. No cosmetic or any outward application will avail if you persist in eating articles which cause the "unsightly things" of which you complain.

Miss D.—Send particulars in the ordinary way, and they will be inserted when space permits.

Police.—Apply at Scotland Yard, Charing Cross ondon, where you can obtain all requisite informa

60. L. D.—Your writing is legible, but you should pracise to acquire boldness and a business-like style.
E. J.—I. The "Era" or any other theatrical paper.
. We know nothing of the "barracks in Bermuda."

W. E. B.—I. The legacy is not in such cases invalidated. 2. It is compulsory, unless very exceptional circumstances exist. 3. Fronounce Calay. 4. This week we have no space to republish what you ask for. If we can find room in our next we will insert it.

sind room in our next we will insert it.

LECTRIP'S MANYA.—1. Accepted literary contributions are as rule paid for—some authors however desire only kudos and disdain coin. 2. Time alone will restore the eyebrows—if restoration be possible. 3. Wash and very gently and softly brush the scalp.

A VERY OLD SUBSCRIERE.—If a distraint were made the housekeeper would have simply to make a declaration that the goods were her own; should however any article belonging to her be located in any part of the house other than the apartments in her own occupancy she should be careful to specify it accordingly.

W.V.—The marriage would be illegal.

FANEN MAY.—No charge is made—see paragraph.

FANET MAY .- No charge is made-see paragraph

FANKT MAT.—No charge is made—see paragraph above, inserted every week.

A CONSTANT READER.—You are responsible for the rent, and consequently your furniture is liable to be distrained upon.

PAUL.—We believe you have been answered. Send your advertisement and we will put it in with the rest in

the ordinary way.

the ordinary way.

IGNORAMUS.—We published the paragraph as an interesting item of information, and as we have not tested the efficacy of Cocs as an Antidote to Opium we can give you no further particulars, nor do we advise you to take it. A chemist would be able to tell you all you want to

know.

C. A. T.—Mix quarter-ounce saltpetre, finely pulverised, with three ounces pure honey. Dilute it with vinegar, and use it as a gargle. Or take a small teaspoonful of it into the mouth occasionally, and let it dissolve slowly.

A. R. W.—The following is said to be a remedy for teader feet: One tablespoonful of carbonate of soda dissolved in a half-pint of cold water. The feet are to be spouged with the solution night and morning.

sponged with the solution night and morning.

G. T.—Cooks make the mistake of boiling things too
much. Meats especially, after reaching the boiling
point, should simmer; and the toughest meats can be
made tender in this way. If you would retain the colour
of any vegetable, plungo it into cold water after bailing.
If anything is made, accidentally, too saft, a tablespoonful of vinegar and one of sugar will correct if.

NEW STORY.

In Our NEXT NUMBER we intend to commence a stirring Historical Romance by a well-known author.

CAPTAIN OF THE HEAD, DANCING CHARLIE and CAPTAIN OF THE TURBET, three seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with three young ladies with a view to matrimony. Captain of the Head is twenty, tall, fair, auburn hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children. Dancing Charlie is twenty-two, tall, fair, blue eyes, good-looking, of a loving disposition. Captain of the Turret is sixteen, tall, fair, red hair, blue eyes, good-looking. eyes, good-looking.

eyes, good-looking.

Froggt, Toady and Cuckoo, three friends, would like to correspond with three young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Froggy is eighteen, dark. Toady is seventeen, fair. Cuckoo is eighteen, fair. Respondents must be good-looking, of a loving disposition.

AFTER LONG YEARS.

VALSE number two, my card is filled, And scores of applicants denied; I might have had them had I willed, And half a dozen more beside. And yet I cannot choose but sigh.
For half-filled cards in days gone by.

Half-filled—until in ev'ry space
I read that one familiar name;
Strange this should be the very place
Where six long years ago I came!
A heart's dead hope, a life's romance,
Lie in those years. Is this our dance

I know that valse. What can it be?
"So old a tune," I hear you say.
Yes, for that valse came out with me
Six years ago this very day.
What lifelong echoes seem to float
Through ev'ry bar, through ev'ry note!

I hear the wild valse music sweet Above, beneath me and around;
My feet the old sweet measure keep.
My ears drink in the old sweet sound
But what is this? The lights are pale,
The very music seems to wail.

Ill, did you ask me? No, not ill— Only just faint with heat and glare. Outside, you say, 'tis cool and still; Maybe I should be calmer there. We pass into the soft star-glow, As once I passed six years ago.

For nere I stood where now I can The full moon sailing overhead; I feel his clasp upon my hand, I hear the very words he said— The joy, the passion and the pain Sweep over me to-night again.

Oh, face that I may never see,
Oh, touch that I shall feel no more,
What leagues there lie 'twixt you and me
Of time and space, of sea and shore!
What dreams and thoughts have swept

between The life that is and might have been!

The dance is done, the music dies,
And silence seems to break the spell.
Oh, aching heart and tear-dimmed eyes,
That valse has done its work too well!
Till now I had forgot in part
That once I had—and lost—a heart.

Loving Herry, twenty-five, fair, blue eyes, loving, fond of children, would like to correspond with a volunteer, artilleryman or mechanic about thirty-two, with a view to matrimony.

Rust, twenty-three, tall, fair, fond of home, would like correspond with a young gentleman between twenty-

To correspond with a young gentleman between twenty-five and thirty.

Fannie, Annette and Cecilla, three sisters, would like to correspond with three young gentlemen with a view to marrimony. Fannie is twenty-one, tall, dark hair and eyes, handsome. Annette is twenty, tall, fair, violet eyes. Cecilia is niueteen, tall, brown hair and eyes, handsome. Respondents must be between twenty-one and thirty, good-looking, fond of home and children.

Charles Ferlas. Cooks 50 Gallest. Pipe To Supper, and

one and thirty, good-looking, fond of home and children.

SEVEN BELLS, COOKS TO GALLEY, PIPE TO SUPPER, and
SHIFT NIGHT LIGHT, four seamen in the Royal Navy,
would like to correspond with four young ladies with a
view to matrimony. Seven Bells is tall, fair, blue eyes,
fond of home and dancing. Cooks to Galley is fair, blue
eyes, fond of home and children. Pipe to Supper is tall,
dark hair and eyes, fond of home and music. Shift
Night Light is dark, good-looking, fond of home and
dancing. Respondents must be between nineteen and

Ystrad and Tox, two friends, would like to correspond tith two young ladies. Ystrad is twenty-one, medium eight, dark hair and eyes. Ton is twenty-one, fair, of loving disposition, fond of home. Respondents must

ANNE and NELLIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two sailors. Annie is seventeen, tall, four of home. Nellie is twenty-one, medium height, fond of

JEMMY BUNGS and TANKY, two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. Jimmy Bungs is twenty-two, medium height, light hair, blue eyes, loving. Tanky is twenty-one, medium height, dark hair, hazel eyes.

Sature Clark and Lively Till, two friends, would like to correspond with two seamen in the Royal Navy with a view to matrimony. Savey Clara is twenty-one, medium height, fair, golden hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of home. Lively Till is twenty-four, medium height, fond of home and children. Eespondents must be between twenty-three and thirty.

BONNIE SCOTLAND And LOVELY SHAMBOCK, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. Bonnie Scotland is twenty, medium height, fair, hazel eyes. Lovely Shamrock is eighteen, medium height, brown eyes, good-looking, fond of music and dancing.

MIZPAH, medium height, fair, would like to correspond

with a dark young gentleman.

Will and Brer, two friends, would like to correspond
with two fair young ladies. Will is twenty-four, dark.
Bert is twenty-one, dark.

HELMET, SPIKE and FRONT PLATE, three friends, would like to correspond with three young ladies with a view to matrimony. Helmet is twenty-one, tall, fair, good-looking, fond of home and children. Spike is twenty-two, tall, blue eyes, fond of home and music. Front Plate is twenty-two, tall, blue eyes, fond of home and music.

Knapsack and Haversack, two young men in the Royal Marines, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. Knapsack is twenty-two, tall, light hair, fond of home and music. Haversack is twenty-one, tall, dark hair, good-looking, fond of music and dancing.

VIGILANT, medium height, dark, would like to correspond with a young lady between twenty and twenty-five.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

LOPIT is responded to by—Kathle, nineteen, medium height, dark hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition. A YOUNG GENTLEMAN by—Fair Agnes, twenty-one, of a loving disposition.

SHOVEL ENGINEER by-Ethel, medium height, dark,

MOFING KITE by—Muriel, fair, good-looking.
LONG HOOKEN by—Laura, eighteen, tall, fair.
ARTHUE by—A.D., nineteen, medium height, fair, fond
of music and dancing.

GEORGE by-M. D., twenty, medium height, fair, fond of singing and dancing. ZILLAH THE GIPST by—Henry, twenty-five, tall, good-looking, fond of home and music.

HARRY by-Dorie, eighteen

CHARLIE by-Elsie, twenty-two. N. P. by-C., dark.

G. F. by-B., fair.

SHOVEL ENGINEER by—A Young Lady, medium height, dark, brown hair and eyes, of a loving disposition.

ALL the back Numbers, Parts, and Volumes of the LONDON READER are in print, and may be had at the Office, 334, Strand; or will be sent to any part of the United Kingdom post free for Three Halfpence, Eight-pence, and Five Shillings and Eightpence each.

THE LONDON READER, post free, Three Halfpence Veekly; or Quarterly One Shilling and Eightpence.

LIFE AND FASHION, Vols. I. and II., Price Seven Shil-

EVERYBODY'S JOURNAL, Parts I. to IV., Price Three-

. Now Ready, Vol. XXXV. of the LONDON READER. Price Four Shillings and Sixpence.

Also the TITLE and INDEX to Vol. XXXV., Price One

NOW READY, the CHRISTMAS (DOUBLE) PART (Parts 217, 218), containing EXTRA OHRISTMAS NUMBER, with Complete Novelette, Illustrated. Price One Shilling, by post One Shilling and Fourpence.

N.B.—Correspondents must address their Letters to the Editor of the LONDON READER, 334, Strand, W.C.

† † We cannot undertake to return Rejected Manuscripts. As they are sent to us voluntarily authors should retain copies.

London: Published for the Proprietors at 334, Strand, by A. SMITH & Co.

A SP

No. S

A Pret

In vain Of neve Lors le

were jest intellige and he u " How " He s the Elbi insurrect seek the

cut down morrow. "Is th "None known, s alone to

Had it b quarrel o